

Saturday is International Women's Day, and how better to celebrate the occasion than by dining out somewhere extra special.

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The original heroine of one of the eight model Beijing Operas could have had an affair with a reactionary!

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At the price of insect bites, diabetes and malaria, Han Yunfeng enjoys recording the changes in the Golden Triangle with his cameras.

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Liu Yonghao, the richest man on the Chinese mainland, has been a popular target for the media as a CPPCC national committee member. Xinhua Photo

## New Rich Take the Stage

By Xiao Rong

As an increasing number of people take to heart late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's maxim "to get rich is glorious," private entrepreneurs are starting to appear in the country's top political arena.

Sixty-five of the 2238 members of the 10th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, and 55 of the 2985 deputies of the 10th National People's Congress (NPC) are from the fledgling private sector. The two on-going conferences opened Monday and Wednesday respectively.

"I will not speak only on behalf of we individual business people, but strive for the prosperity of the entire nation," says Xu Guanju, a newly elected member of the CPPCC National Committee.

Xu, 42, chairman of Chuanhua Group, was elected vice-chairman of the CPPCC provincial committee of Zhejiang Province in January.

Yin Mingshan, chairman of Chongqing Lifan Industrial Group, was late last year named vice chairman of the Chongqing CPPCC committee. The two, both of whom chair their local Federation of Industry and Commerce, are the first private entrepreneurs to become CPPCC provincial leaders.

Meanwhile, half of the 9th national committee of the Chinese Federation of Industry and Commerce come from the private sector. The federation acts mainly as a bridge between the Communist Party and private economies.

There has also been an increasing number of private entrepreneurs joining local committees of the NPC and CPPCC in the past five years.

"It's inevitable that the emergent new rich will demand a greater political voice with the improvement of their economic status," comments Cai Dingji-

'It's inevitable that the emergent new rich will demand a greater political voice with the improvement of their economic status.'

an, professor at the Beijing University NPC research center.

In the opinion of Professor Zhu Lijia, from the National School of Administration, the recognition of private entrepreneurs' political status represents a great improvement in China's democracy.

"It's a reflection of the strategic will of China's top leadership to push forward the construction of an all-round wealthy society," Zhu told *Beijing Today*.

The private sector accounts for one third of China's total economy, with over 4,000 billion yuan of investment coming from private capital last year.

The private economy was officially

recognized as "an important component of the socialist market economy" at 1997's 15th Chinese Communist Party Congress.

President Jiang Zemin's speech in 2001 at the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, encouraging the party to attract excellent members of other social estates, says Zhu, marked a turning point in the party's embracing of the new rich.

"With the development of China's democracy and the growing influence of private wealth on the national economy, private entrepreneurs will play an increasingly significant role in our political areas," Zhu says.

One controversial concern regarding the acceptance of private entrepreneurs into the Communist Party, is whether their increasing numbers will change the nature of the Party.

"We should not judge people's political progress only according to their wealth, which has been emphasized by Jiang Zemin at the 16th National Party Congress," says Zhu.

The Congress stated that "all legal income earned either through work or other means should be protected," adding that emergent social estates including private entrepreneurs are all contributors to the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics.

"This will greatly stimulate enthusiasm of all advanced members of private sectors to participate in the nation's political process," says Zhu.

As Xu Guanju says, "The possession of wealth entails responsibility. The richer you are, the more responsibilities you need to undertake. So my goal in the next five years is to contribute both to CPPCC work and my business."

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: LI SHI

## Crafty Companies Exploit Pension Loopholes

By Xiao Rong

As a nationwide pension network slowly takes shape in China, gaps in the current regulations are allowing some enterprises to launder money or evade tax under the cover of group pension insurance.

Monday's *Economic Observer* reports that in a labor dispute between Xingye Securities and a former employee, the company was accused of exploiting loopholes in relevant regulations by buying group pension insurance in order to evade tax.

After resigning from the Xiamen branch of Xingye Securities, where she had worked for over five years, Lin Yu (a pseudonym), found that the company had purchased group pension insurance for its staff, worth over 10 million yuan. However few employees were informed about it.

Not long after the company took out the insurance, it cancelled the policy. Only those employees who had worked for the company for more than six years received a payout, but even they were not told clearly how they had qualified.

"If it's a benefit plan for employees, then the information should be released through the trade union. I would certainly have stayed another three months to qualify for the insurance if I'd know," complained Lin, who has since dropped her case.

Meanwhile Feng Xiaolian, vice manager of Xingye Securities, admitted to the *Economic Observer* that

buying the group pension insurance was a deal between Xingye and the insurance company to evade relevant taxes.

"The commission charges deducted from our original premium when we cancelled the insurance are less than the taxes we would have had to pay if we distributed the money as bonuses," said Feng.

China levies a 20 percent tax on bonuses paid to employees. But to encourage enterprises to develop their own pension plans, the State Council has stipulated that taxes on pension fund contributions within four percent of an enterprise's total wage expenditure can be waived.

"The Xingye Securities case only reflects part of the problem. In most cases, state-owned enterprises buy group pension insurance as a way of money laundering, which results in the loss of national assets," says Cao Qingyang, from the China Insurance Association.

The government is now putting together a network of pension funds and unemployment insurance to cover about 200 million people, according to Cao, to replace the outmoded "cradle-to-grave" welfare system.

"There are three sections of the current social security system; basic national pension insurance, the corporation pension system, and personal commercial insurance," Cao told *Beijing Today*.

Targeting the great market potential of corporation pension insurance, most insurance companies have developed a diversified range of group pension insurance products, which have contributed to a big increase in profits.

In the fierce competition among insurance companies for the corpo-

ration pension plan market, however, some enterprises purchase and revoke group pension insurance to evade taxes or transfer assets by taking advantage of loopholes in relevant laws and regulations, according to Cao.

"It is an open secret among insurance industries: Certain corporations that purchase group pension insurance breach financial regulations to achieve an illegal goal," says Cao.

"Insurance companies usually cannot stop clients from canceling insurance, as long as the client can present sufficient authorization; nor can insurance companies investigate whether enterprises abide by relevant financial regulations," says Cao.

In some cases, Cao added, insurance companies even collude with clients to purchase group pension insurance and then cancel it, a move that is "beneficial and profitable" to both sides.

*Beijing Today* called Ping'an Insurance Group Beijing branch on

'It is an open secret among insurance industries: Certain corporations that purchase group pension insurance breach financial regulations to achieve an illegal goal.'

Tuesday, pretending to seek advice on the purchase of group pension insurance.

A representative introduced in detail how to purchase group pension insurance. When asked whether it was possible to cancel the insurance, she said it was up to the clients themselves.

"Lots of companies buy group pension insurance and then revoke them to avoid taxes. We can discuss how to go about this," she added.

*Beijing Today* then contacted China Life Insurance, another big name in insurance. The woman in charge of group insurance business enthusiastically explained the requirements of purchasing group pension insurance. She was cautious enough, however, to suggest, "discussing with your company accountant possible ways of drawing up the accounts."

"Most insurance companies are quite aware of the possible motives of corporate clients that come to purchase group pension insurance," said Cao. "But whether or not clients cancel the insurance after purchase, insurance companies still make a profit."

Also, as Cao points out, "it's not the duty of insurance companies to supervise their clients."

In December last year the China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC) issued a stipulation to regulate various life insurance products.

In the field of group pension insurance, CIRC reiterated that "the payment of insurance must be based on the condition that the beneficiary reaches retirement age, and only when corporations face merger or bankruptcy can the insurance be claimed in advance."

All those corporations that want to purchase group pension insurance, must present a resolution from the trade union or board of directors, the stipulation reads. When insurance is drawn prior to maturity, insurance companies should notify local tax bureaus or help deduct taxes for taxation organizations.

"The stipulation by CIRC is one way of preventing black dealing, more still needs to be done on the side of both the corporations and tax bureaus to strengthen supervision," said Cao.



# Spotlight Hits on Projects Open to Investment

By Ema Ma

Since February 21, 53 city projects open to investment have been posted on the website of the Beijing Economic Commission. Legal investors from China and abroad capable of providing capital, technology, management experience and inexpensive processing sites outside of the city are welcome to participate in these undertakings.

According to Mr. Liu, a staff member of the Beijing Economic Commission, the organization is working to increase the number of promising projects in its investment catalog.

The items currently up for investment span a wide range of fields and companies, such as capital re-injection in Yili Food, a major Beijing brand, and cooperating with

Shougang, a giant local company, in establishing breakfast outlets, an food and beverage processing base, a sanatorium, a tourism company, engaging in software research and other projects. Other operations include the technological improvement of Beiqi Futian Auto, construction of the Dragon Seal Wines Manor, development of cosmetics and biology products, producing upscale upright

pianos, and developing digital printing and three-dimensional clothing design.

Prospective investors can get details on the projects, including information on investment scale, cooperation modes and contact information, through the commission's website, <http://www.bjec.gov.cn/program/search/search.asp>, or by calling the commission at 8523 5036-5045.

## Procedures for Foreign Drivers Simplified

By Su Wei

Good news for the over 100,000 foreign vehicle owners in the capital — the Beijing Public Security Bureau of Transportation Management has announced it is taking action to improve its efficiency in issuing black license plates.

According to Yang Guoping of the bureau's News Center, as of March 1, it takes only one day for foreigners to get vehicle registration certificates, "if they present complete sets of required materials."

"The process is much faster than in 2002, when it took three working days, and before that, when it took 30 working days," said Yang. "We have also shortened the time it takes to process a transfer for a foreign vehicle to areas outside of Beijing to one day."

The bureau is preparing to issue brochures with information about vehicle registration and licenses written in Chinese and English.

March 1 also marked the opening of over 40 centers around the city to foreigners that need to take their annual driving approval tests. In the past, non-Chinese were only allowed to test at the Beiyuan Testing Center in Chaoyang District.

"Foreigners can locate the most convenient location for them by visiting our website ([www.bjjtgl.gov.cn](http://www.bjjtgl.gov.cn)) or calling the vehicle management stations in each district to get a name list of these testing centers," said Yang. "We are certain that foreign residents will have less complaints and be more content with the new system."

## Smart Cards to Ease Daily Commute

By Ema Ma

Commuting looks to get easier in the capital with the signing of an agreement last Monday between Beijing Municipal Administration and Communications (BMAG) and nine taxi companies on the launch of the "One Card" project in Beijing.

This project calls for the creation of smart cards that can be used to pay for fares on buses, subway lines and taxis. As of April 1, 21,000 taxis citywide will be able to accept the cards. Of course cash payments will still be taken for these transportation services.

Both commuters and taxi drivers stand to benefit from the project. A taxi driver from the Yuyang United taxi company who did not give his name said, "payment with the cards is convenient, and it means we drivers don't have to worry about getting counterfeit bills or carrying a lot of cash around."

According to BMAG's schedule, the "One Card" will be accepted on 4,000 local buses starting in May, and then by the light rail system in June. Before September 15, 30,000 taxis belonging to 11 companies will be able to take the cards, and construction of card-reading equipment on the No. 1 and No. 2 subways lines began this year.

The cards will be available for purchase and recharge at 16 CITIC bank branches and 48 post offices around the city.

Deputy Mayor of Beijing Wang Guangtao said at the financing agreement signature ceremony between CITIC bank and BMAG on February 20 that eight million "One Cards" will be issued in the future. Eventually, the cards will be able to be used to pay for water, electricity, heating and gas fees, as well as transportation and parking fares, food at fast-food chains and items at book kiosks.

## First QFII Custodial Banks Approved

By Shan Jinliang

The Industrial and Commerce Bank of China (ICBC) and four other domestic banks have been named China's first group of custodial banks for qualified foreign institutional investors (QFII), following an announcement made by the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) and State Foreign Currency Administration last week.

The four other banks are the Bank of China, China Agricultural Bank, China Bank of Communications and China Construction Bank. With the green light from these custodial banks, foreign investors can apply for QFII certification. The first group of QFIIs are expected to be named in the near future.

Including these five banks, the country's central bank, the People's Bank of China, has approved nine banks to conduct QFII securities custodial business on the Chinese mainland. The other financial institutions are China Merchants Bank, three Shanghai branches of Standard Chartered Bank, Hong Kong-based Shanghai Bank of China and Citibank. The final go-ahead for those banks awaits CSRC examination and approval of their QFII certificates.

The Chinese government issued QFII guidelines early last December, according to which overseas firms are allowed to trade in the previously domestic-only A shares market and the bond market, and started accepting applications from interested overseas institutions on December 1.

## Government Secrets Now for Sale

By Ema Ma

Formerly classified documents have gone public since the launch of sales of the book *Beijing Government Communiqué* at 26 Xinhua Bookstores around the city last Saturday.

According to the Beijing government's manual for civil servants that took effect on January 30, all bylaws, orders or decisions issued by government bodies should be made public in regularly-published editions of the *Communiqué*.



# Maglev Going Once, Going Twice...

Auctioneer Xu Xuanxuan oversees the sale of the naming rights to the world's first commercial magnetic levitation train in Pudong, Shanghai on March 5. Shanghai Sinhoo Real Estate Company won the bidding, meaning its name will appear on the cutting-edge Maglev, for the price of 20.9 million yuan.

Xinhua Photo

## Device Uncovers Peeping Toms

By Ema Ma

With the proliferation of tiny digital cameras on mobile phones and surreptitious pinhole cameras, privacy is hard to ensure these days. Weak regulation of these spy gadgets has allowed them to spread to the alarm of many average citizens. When the Probe Dog, an anti-surveillance device priced at nearly 1,000 yuan, hit store shelves in Beijing right after Spring Festival, stocks sold out almost immediately.

The palm-sized wireless device is claimed to be able to precisely and quickly detect all wireless pinhole cameras or bugs within a 10-meter radius.

Tang Tai, inventor of the Probe Dog and an engineer at the SoftMedia Security Technology Academe of Tsinghua University, told the *Beijing Evening News*, "the inspiration for the device came from one of my friends grumbling about personal privacy now that more hotels have been exposed for installing covert cameras in guest rooms."

According to Tang, the Probe Dog works on the same principle as military-use microwave and radar detectors, as it can detect electro-

magnetic waves or radio beams emitted from wireless cameras. The discovery of such a signal triggers a flashing red light on the device that blinks faster the closer it is to the source.

"Our original target customers were those in the 'in-crowd' who like to follow trends. But then market surveys came back indicating huge demand from businesspeople. We have received large orders from some big companies," he added.

According to a *Beijing Evening News* report published on February 25, the instruction manual that comes with the Probe Dog claims the device is ideal for frequent travelers, women concerned about having their picture secretly taken, and people who handle classified information, in such places as hotels, swimming pools, public bathrooms, locker rooms, cinemas and art galleries.

Tang said his academe is researching and developing a new generation of detectors that can find wired mini-cameras. Among their more ambitious plans are inventing a shelter device that can deactivate all hidden cameras, bugs and other concealed devices within a

certain range.

Regarding the popularity of his product and others like it, Tang opined, "it's both funny and sad that people have to worry about possible spy holes when they're in hotels or locker rooms."

Though they should be strictly regulated, surveillance gadgets are openly traded in Beijing. At stalls at technology fairs and large markets, pinhole cameras normally sell for less than 100 yuan. The owner of one such stall, who requested anonymity, said these kinds of cameras are strong sellers, drawing customers such as bosses that want to spy on their employees, people that wish to oversee their household help, and suspicious spouses that want to keep track of their husband or wife.

"The growth of the anti-surveillance device industry shows people are taking makeshift countermeasures to protect personal privacy, since regulation lags far behind technological progress. We can expect the emergence of an anti-anti-surveillance industry in the near future if the government does nothing to control civil spying," Tang said.

## Campaign Sheds New Light on UK

By Ivy Zhang

Think UK, a year-long campaign organized by the British Embassy and British Council in China, is set for official launch at the end of April. British Prime Minister Tony Blair may be present at the opening ceremony, according to the embassy.

"Think UK is an organized, serious activity that we will plan throughout this year. It aims to help Chinese people understand more about what the UK really looks like. Some activities have already started and will continue until November," said Alex Rinfield, press officer of the British Embassy.

This campaign, the largest of its kind ever organized by the UK overseas, will cover the four cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing. The target audience is China's rising generation of decision makers and consumers aged 16 to 35.

"One of our focuses is creative culture in the UK at the moment, a side of the country not very well known to China. We are trying to bring to Chinese people the very modern and creative side of British society," said Pinfield.

He added that the organizers of the campaign are putting together projects to show off influential new ideas that originated in the UK in such sectors as art, music, fashion, technology and business.

"There are many ways for us to use British creativity. The idea of creating new things and finding new ways to solve problems is directly relevant to China because China has been growing very fast over the last few years, economically and politically," said Pinfield.

A series of high-profile activities will be held during the campaign. Among the highlights, Morcheeba, a popular British band, will plan in Beijing on March 8 and 9, and John Sulston, the 2002 Nobel Prize winner in biology, will appear at the 50 Years of DNA forum in April to address genetics and cloning issues. April will see the Writers Train project, in which top Chinese and British writers will tour around the country in a special train writing stories for newspapers and television programs. Then, in June, an exhibition of British sculptor Antony Gormley's work *Asian Field*, made of up over 120,000 figurines created by young Chinese people (see story in last week's *Beijing Today*), will be held in Beijing.

Details on the agenda and updated information can be found at the official website for the campaign at [www.thinkuk.org.cn](http://www.thinkuk.org.cn).

## India and China Agree on Tariff Concessions

By Ema Ma

Officials from China and India reached a bilateral agreement on February 22 in Beijing that, according to the Bangkok Agreement, the two countries will provide each other with even lower tariffs than those granted to most-favored nations within this year. That means the members of the Agreement will have access, on concessionary terms, to the two massive markets that have a combined population of more than 2.5 billion people.

The new policy was made in keeping with the Agreement on Trade Negotiations among Developing Member Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, popularly known as Bangkok Agreement, signed in 1975. That deal is the world's largest regional trade agreement in terms of market potential. This preferential tariff arrangement is aimed at promoting intra-regional trade through exchange of mutually-set concessions by member countries.

China formally signed onto the Bangkok Agreement on May 23, 2001. To date, five other countries, Bangladesh, India, the Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Sri Lanka, have done the same. Before the agreement with India, China had held and concluded negotiations with all the other member states.

Last year, bilateral trade between China and India increased 37.6 percent to \$4.95 billion.



Photo by Wei Tong



# Microsoft Cozies Up to Government

By Shan Jinliang

Microsoft founder and chairman Bill Gates made his eighth visit to China since 1994 last week, during which he signed several contracts and memorandums with the Chinese government and companies. The visit is seen as an indication of the importance the software mogul puts on the China market.

Gates' China visit could be another milestone for Microsoft China, since it has just marked its tenth birthday, but celebrations are perhaps not appropriate, given the current state of malaise of the world's leading software maker in this country.

## Early bird but missed the worm

Microsoft established its China headquarter in Beijing in 1992, and then two more branches in Guangzhou and Shanghai.

The company did get a lot from its Chinese business initially, says Lü Benfu, an IT analyst from the China Academy of Sciences, but currently the revenue from China contributes only a little to the overall income of

Microsoft. "Microsoft is the worst contributor to Chinese economy," said Lü, "but now China is growing important for Microsoft, since the world IT market is in a decline."

In December 2001, Microsoft lost out to Linux in the Beijing government's procurement of office software. The loss in the capital made successful competition for government contracts in other cities and provinces almost impossible. The only two exceptions were Shanghai last June, after Microsoft China's new president, Tang Jun, took office, and Zhejiang Province last month.

Lü adds that Linux' securing of the Beijing contract over Microsoft represented not only a financial loss for the software giant, but also a damaging blow to its image in China.

## A long list of positive gestures to China

According to a memorandum Gates signed with the municipal government, Microsoft will raise its investment in Beijing and cooperate with the government on software development, software outsourcing and staff training.

The company says it will invest US \$2.2 million in a computer technology lab in Beijing in five years, and Chinese IT hardware and software manufactures will be able to share its advanced technology. Microsoft also promises to train 600 software technicians and 600 software managers for the state software base in Zhongguancun.

Gates also signed contracts with the Industrial and Commerce Bank of China, China Unicom and China National Petroleum spoke about Microsoft's image to college students at Beijing's Olympics Center, and promoted its .NET strategy to big Chinese IT companies.

## Largest contract with no revenue

Just a few hours before Gates headed back to the US, he announced his biggest achievement for this visit, an agreement with the China Information Technology Security Certification Center on a Government Security Program (GSP), under which Windows source code would be provided to relevant government departments.

"It is the most valuable contract though it brings no revenue," said Gates at the conference last Friday. A subsequent press release described the GSP as "a global initiative that provides national governments with controlled access to Microsoft Windows source code and other technical information they need to be confident in the security of the Windows platform."

Security concerns on source code was one of the factors that lead the Beijing government choose Linux over Microsoft.

The initiative was condemned by Fang Xingdong, an IT analyst from Internet Labs, as a trick, however Lü Benfu maintains it is a positive way for Microsoft to enhance its relations with China, but added that "Since the source code is open to the government not the companies," said Lü, "it is only symbolic step for Microsoft."

According to Fang, the move by Microsoft is just aimed at meeting the needs of a to-be-established Governmental Procurement Law for a large scale of governmental software.

## New Property and Tech Exchange for Zhongguancun

By Shan Jinliang

A new Property and Technology Exchange is expected to ease financing difficulties at the Zhongguancun Science Park.

Officially established on March 1, the new exchange is located on the former site of the Universiade Village and will mainly serve Zhongguancun companies. Property exchange refers to the payable exchange on property ownership, including technology, share financing, purchase and acquisition and share trading.

According to Xiong Yan, president of the exchange, the major businesses of the exchange cover hi-tech share trading, state-owned property exchange and custodial business on non-listed companies. Hi-tech exchange, small and medium company finance, foreign capital acquisition and software property exchange are also listed.

Lack of venture capital to launch companies is a long-standing and common problem standing in the way of the development of Zhongguancun's IT industry. But at the same time, the Science Park has been unable to find proper projects on which to invest some 40 billion yuan in venture capital it has in the bank.

According to economist Wu Jinglian, the "Over the Counter" exchange is an effective way to withdraw venture capital, and its establishment is even more important than that of the long delayed second-board stock market.

The exchange will run on the basis of brokerage trading. Foreign and overseas companies on securities, investment consultancy and technology agency will be the main source of the brokers.

## A New Way of Banking

By Zhao Hongyi

After a decade of rapid growth, the world banking industry is heading for a sharp decline. The key to avoiding the crisis is "universal banking." So claims Dr. Han-Ulrich Doerig, vice chairman of the Credit Suisse Group. Doerig explained his "universal banking" concept at the launch of the Chinese edition of his book, under the same title, earlier this week in Beijing.

"The crisis is understandable because industries have their cycles," Doreig noted in his introduction of the book. But more seriously, the industry is facing new challenges, brought by information technology advances, globalization, the growing complexity of products and markets, increasing competition worldwide, and increasing market risks, he said.

"Universal Banking" refers to comprehensive banks combining all banking services under one roof, such as lending, deposits, trading, capital market, brokerage, assets management, consultancy, and even insurance.

"This can help banks to mitigate and manage risks," explained the author who spent 35 years in the world financial industry. "Instead of the traditional 'Big Macs' who rely on the huge capital strength and acquire all business. The new type banks will be more flexible and rely more on the services provided, particularly risk management services that are under increasing demand."

First published in 1997, *Universal Banking* quickly became popular worldwide. Though a Chinese version was launched, Doreig says he did not expect the concept to be accepted by China's market.

"China needs time to introduce the right structures, find enough talents and establish a legislative system compliant with the market before adopting the concept. What China's financial industry needs most is supervision and self-discipline."

"Fortunately, we can find the hope in the non-state commercial banks in the coastal areas. These banks are heading towards 'universal banking,' no matter they are willing or not, because the market is forcing them to the mainstream."

## Agilent Launches China Five-year Plan

By Chen Ying

Agilent Technologies announced a five year strategy to comprehensively speed up investment in China last Friday in Beijing.

According to the plan, the global technology giant will invest more than US \$100 million in the following five years in China, in the areas of manufacturing, research and development, management of its supply link, customer service and employee development.

"With the exception of the US, China will become Agilent's largest market within no more than five years," said Su Hai, general manager of Agilent Technologies China.

This year, Agilent Shanghai will produce its first chemical analysis equipment aimed solely at the China market, which is completely localized for its development and manufacture.



Air China president Li Xiaxiang (center), CITIC Pacific chairman Larry Yung (left) and Capital Airport general manager Li Peiyang signed an agreement establishing China International Air Cargo Corp in Beijing Monday. Air China takes a 51 percent stake in the joint venture. With a registered capital of 2.2 billion yuan, it will be the largest domestic air cargo company in China, while 65 percent of China's air cargo market is owned by foreign companies.

Photo by Wang Baihui



Mr. Ye from a Beijing advertising company became the first owner of the locally produced two-door Gol Monday. The low-budget car, manufactured by Shanghai Volkswagen, made its China debut in Shanghai last Friday.

Xinhua Photo

## P&G China Vice-president Resigns

By Shan Jinliang / Cai Yifei

The Guangzhou-based Procter & Gamble (P&G) China confirmed to *Beijing Today* Monday that James Wei, P&G Global vice president and general manager of the beauty, hairstyling, personal health and oral care divisions in the Greater China region, will depart the company early this month.

The resignation of the highest-ranking Chinese manager at P&G comes as a surprise to many. P&G China vice director of public affairs Yvonne Pei told the *21st Business Herald* last week that it was Wei's personal decision to leave the company.

Wei started at P&G in the 1984, and since then has served as Pantene shampoo brand manager in Taiwan, P&G Taiwan general manager, and SK-II Greater China president. From 2001, he worked as general manager of P&G's skin care product division, and had "made many very important contributions to the business in Greater China, according to a P&G China's fax to *Beijing Today*."

As one of the earliest Pantene brand managers, Wei established the marketing position for the brand, clarified the sales channel and set the parameters for its operational model. Today Pantene shampoo boasts the highest market share and a sales volume of over US \$1 billion.

"The success was made in light of the global decline of P&G," said an official from the company, who requested anonymity, "but Wei developed the Great China business smoothly way." According to the *21st Business Herald*, almost all the shampoo, skin care and feminine hygiene product brands grew at an annual rate of 20 percent under Wei's management.

P&G is widely seen as a school for professional managers, similar to General Electric. Around 50 people leave P&G China every year, while it recruits 150 college graduates annually. Company insiders say most of the people who leave are in their 30s, but it is quite rare for a top manager in his 40s to leave to start a new business, if that is what Wei plans to do.



James Wei

Photo by Zhang Di

## Ericsson VP Leaves for AsiaInfo

By Tony Shaw

Ericsson China executive vice president and chief marketing officer Zhang Xingsheng will end his 12-year stint with that company on April 1 to start work as CEO and president of AsiaInfo, a Nasdaq listed Chinese IT company.

The news was released by AsiaInfo and Ericsson China in Beijing last Tuesday. With bases in Beijing and Silicon Valley, AsiaInfo builds customer billing and call-handling software for China Telecom and China Netcom, China's biggest telephone operators.

Zhang said it was only a personal choice to work for AsiaInfo. In the press release, Ericsson China said it was Zhang's own decision to leave, and that there were no personal conflicts involved in his departure. Even so, Zhang's resignation has reverberated through the industry, as he is generally credited with having led Ericsson's mobile phone business into the top three in China.

## New career

Zhang, 48, began his career at Ericsson China in 1990. He has held posts including office public relations manager and general manager of the mobile phone department. In 1996, Zhang was promoted to executive vice president in charge of the mobile phone department.

Salary appears not to be a key factor in Zhang's job change. He says he will get almost the same at his new job as he did at Ericsson.

Local media have reported that both Ericsson and its China division have suffered declines in the past few years and attribute that as a key reason for Zhang's resignation. When Ericsson lost money from early 2001, Ericsson China also saw its mobile phone market share gradually seized by Chinese competitors. In the late 1990s, Ericsson was still among the top three mobile phone brands in China, but 2002 figures from the Ministry of Information Industry revealed it had slipped out of the top five in China's market.

Meanwhile AisaInfo holds a 60 percent share of China's Internet construction, and in 2000, a bleak year for most telecom companies, made a net profit of US \$5.7 million. It was also listed among the world's 300 top performing small enterprises by *Forbes* in 2002.

According to James Ding, AsiaInfo chairman and former CEO, the company will focus in 2003 on expanding its already market-leading share of China's formerly fast-growing telecom software industry. Statistics from Beijing Information Industry

Association show the telecom software and service sector grew rapidly in 2002 and its overall income would be over 20 billion yuan in 2003.

"AsiaInfo can entitle me the right to make decisions, while I was more like a executive person at Ericsson," said Zhang last week. As *Beijing Youth Daily* commented last Wednesday, Zhang will choose another platform to realize his capabilities in AsiaInfo and start a new career.

## Hopes and doubts

Last year, AsiaInfo vowed to transform itself from an IP and Internet service provider into an all-telecom software solution provider. It has actively been seeking senior management familiar with the whole telecom industry and who are able to lead the company into the telecom core software business. *Economic Observer* said Monday that Ding hoped Zhang could introduce his "youthful spirit" and "enthusiasm" to the "engineer-dominated company".

The paper commented that Zhang would face a tough challenge seeking a balance between short-term payments and the long-term interest of Wall Street investors, because he was only a chief marketing office in multinational's regional company.

At the same time, some industry analysts have expressed doubts about Zhang's ability, arguing that Ericsson China's growth rate slowed under his leadership, and that there remained a question mark over whether Zhang could increase AsiaInfo's share value on the Nasdaq.

## Amicable departure

Ericsson China maintains Zhang's departure would have little impact on its regular operations. Senior marketing director Tu Min attended the press release for Zhang's resignation, organized by AsiaInfo, suggesting a smooth transfer for the company.

Ericsson China also told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that Zhang would intensify ties between the two companies. According to the company, it has begun cooperation with AsiaInfo on streamlining the China Telecom network three years ago. Zhang also expressed the desire to maintain cooperation with Ericsson.



Zhang Xingsheng

Photo by Photocom



# Bush's Dollar Diplomacy

March 3 (www.BusinessWeek.com) - Money, it is often said, is the mother's milk of politics. It's also turning out to be the nectar of superpower diplomacy.

As George Bush approaches the diplomatic climax of his arduous drive to win backing for war with Iraq, US diplomats increasingly find themselves tempted to brandish Uncle Sam's checkbook - and with it, the suggestion that sticking with America now might mean rewards later.

Much of this bid to win friends is playing out in the UN Security Council. But in broader terms, pressure on the White House goes to the heart of Washington's current dilemma - America's poverty of friendship.

**UNSHARED BURDEN.** Indeed, the bill for the administration's approach is just starting to come due, and the bottom line is breathtaking.

On February 25, Bush aides revealed that the cost of a military campaign could top \$95 billion. That's a far cry from what happened during

the first Gulf War, when coalition partners paid some \$70 billion of the \$75 billion war tab.

"Rebuilding Iraq will require a sustained commitment from many nations, including our own," Bush said in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute on February 26.

**SHOWERING LARGESSE.** In a sense, the current bargaining round was heralded by the September 11 terror strike on America. None fared better than Pakistan, a desperately poor country that was pivotal in the anti-terror war. President Pervez Musharraf's regime suddenly found itself freed of sanctions imposed for its nuclear testing and the beneficiary of a \$12.5 billion debt-restructuring package from the US and other nations. That helped lift Pakistan from a debtor nation to one that now runs a modest current-account surplus.

The most naked example of haggling came in the US-Turkey base talks. With

Turkish public opinion strongly anti-war and their economy on the ropes, the Turks sought upward of \$35 billion in US assistance for the right to station American troops on Turkish soil. After bitter negotiations, Ankara came away with a package that includes up to \$20 billion in cash and loans, some NATO military gear, and assurances that Iraq's Kurdish nationalists will be kept in check.

**SWING VOTES.** Jordan may actually be the hardest hit of Iraq's neighbors this time. The Administration is expected to ask Congress for \$150 million in aid on top of the \$300 million a year Jordan now receives. The US has already started to deliver on a deal for F-16 fighters and Patriot II missiles, probably at a discount.

Other neighbors have their hands out, too. Israel wants \$4 billion in additional military aid and \$8 billion in loan guarantees. Egypt, which sees war losses of \$1.6 billion to its tourist-dependent econ-

omy, wants faster delivery of as much as \$415 million earmarked for Cairo.

Much of the dickering has been more subtle. Key swing votes on the Security Council include Chile, Guinea, Cameroon, Angola, Mexico, and Pakistan. Both France and the US are vying for those votes, the US by noting that the American drive to ease agriculture subsidies among rich nations could open markets to Third World farmers.

**DIRE PREDICTIONS.** It's still far from clear whether dollar diplomacy will give Uncle Sam a clear-cut victory in the UN.

If all goes swimmingly on the battlefield, some of today's qualms will surely fade. But if not, America could find itself standing far more alone than it is today.

Fast friends may be hard to come by in the self-centered world of diplomacy. Still, the kind you make because of truly shared interests seem preferable to the kind you rent.

(Stan Crock and Lee Walczak)



Franz Humer, CEO of Roche

AP Photo

## Roche Denies Merger with Novartis

Basel, Switzerland, February 26 (Reuters) - Franz Humer, chairman and CEO of Roche Holding AG, denied a possible merger with Novartis to create the world's second or third largest pharmaceuticals concern.

Humer scoffed at Novartis's assertion that its one-third (32.7 percent) voting stake in Roche would influence Roche's strategic decisions.

Roche packed a whopping 5.19 billion Swiss franc (\$3.82 billion) writedown last year on the value of equity investments - triggering a net loss of 4.03 billion francs.

The company's new hepatitis C drug Pegasis got off to a strong start though. Its HIV drug Fuzeon is also set for approval next month.

(Michael Shields)

## Kmart faces \$1.5 Billion Claim From Food Seller

New York, March 5 (USA Today) - Food supplier Fleming filed nearly \$1.5 billion in claims against former client Kmart.

The claims include: bills for \$27 million not paid before Kmart filed for bankruptcy protection on January 22, 2002; damages of \$1.4 billion for losses from Kmart breaching the supply agreement through bankruptcy protection; and \$30 million after Kmart's filing.

Kmart says it is prepared for such claims. "We've allowed \$4.3 billion for claims we find legitimate from all of our vendors and all of our landlords," says John Butler, Kmart's lead bankruptcy attorney at Skadden Arps.

Chuck Conaway, chairman and CEO of Kmart Corp

AP Photo

## Pfizer Gets Europe Go-ahead

Barcelona, February 27 (Financial Times) - European Union regulators cleared Pfizer's planned \$54bn purchase of its rival Pharmacia. Pfizer is awaiting US Federal Trade Commission approval, which would cushion it as the world's largest drug-maker, giving it almost \$53bn in sales.

The combined company will have 11 per cent of the European drug market, up from 7 per cent for Pfizer. EU competition officials placed certain conditions, including the cancellation of two new male impotence drugs in development by Pharmacia, because of Pfizer's dominance with Viagra.

(Christopher Boue & Francesco Guerrera)

## Google Jumps Deeper into Targeted Ad Market

March 5 (www.EcommerceTimes.com) - Search engine Google has launched an advertising service that will deliver web pages with targeted, sponsored links instead of random banner ads.

The move comes on the heels of a plan announced by Google's main competitor in the pay-per-click ad market, Overture Services, to offer what it bills as "contextual advertising."

Both services are designed to augment web pages with advertising relevant to the content on that page. For instance, a sports news page might have ads for ticket sales or sporting goods.

(Keith Regan)

## OECD Makes Progress in Steel Subsidy Talks

Paris, February 26 (www.VillageSteel.com) - Agreement was reached on major steel subsidy reduction at the two-day meeting of the OECD's Steel Disciplines Study Group in Paris February 24-25. No details of the compromises have yet been released.

Another meeting will be held in May to follow up on the discussions. The US hopes the work will be completed in time for the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Mexico's Cancun in September 2003.

The new rules will also be binding to non-OECD giant steel producers, such as Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and China. The rules will be a criterion for the WTO accession of the first three countries, in particular.

Worries also exist over the demand for a significant capacity reduction to prevent oversupply, given the strong demand from East Asia currently creating a worldwide steel shortage.

# State Farm Posts \$2.8 Billion Loss

Bloomington, Illinois, February 28 (AP) - Underwriting losses and a sluggish stock market combined to produce a \$2.8 billion net loss at State Farm in 2002, the second straight year in the red for America's largest insurance company.

Despite the loss, the Bloomington-based company saw the results as "encouraging" on the heels of a \$5 billion net loss in 2001, the worst in its 80-year history, said State Farm spokesman Dick Luedke.

State Farm's revenue from premiums rose from \$40 billion in 2001 to \$44.4 billion last year. But the increases failed to keep pace with claims, reflected in underwriting losses of \$6 billion, up from \$5.3 billion in 2001.

Like other insurers, State Farm also was hurt by the sagging economy. The company lost \$4.6 billion in the stock market. Excluding write-downs for investments that have decreased in value, the loss was \$1.6 billion.

Standard & Poor's, which last year stripped the insurer of its triple-A credit rating, said the loss wasn't as bad as expected but the stock retained its double-A rating.

(Jan Dennis)

## Zurich Financial Posts \$3.4 Billion Loss

Zurich, February 27 (Dow Jones Newswires) - Zurich Financial Services reported a record full-year net loss of \$3.4 billion.

The Swiss insurance company, one of the world's largest, blamed the widening of the loss from the prior year's \$387 million on provisions of \$3.5 billion to restore its balance sheet, and exit risky and unprofitable business no longer considered core.

In common with its rivals, Zurich Financial also suffered from the effect of weak equity markets and low interest rates on its investments.

"While our non-life business is benefiting from the best pricing environment we have seen in 15 years, weak and fragile equity markets and record low interest rates are negatively affecting our life business and investment result," said James Schiro, chief executive of the group.

(Anita Greil)

## Analysts' Take:

**Dr. Hans-Ulrich Doerig, vice chairman, Credit Suisse Group**

The 9/11 terrorist attacks caused a sudden shock for the insurance industry, making the business either impossible or too expensive. For instance, insurance companies have cancelled almost all art work display insurance worldwide, because of the estimated risk.

The stock market prosperity in the 1990s led insurance companies, both in Europe and the US, to make money for their claims payment from the market, rather than the other sources such as traditional asset management. The collapse of the stock market in the past few years made it impossible to raise money this way any more, and led to the huge deficits in their balance sheets.

The critical issue is how you mitigate the risks. Credit Suisse was also active in the stock market. But being a comprehensive financial institution, we diversified our business and income sources and avoided a collapse.

A new round of consolidation is inevitable in the industry. Switzerland has more than 110 insurance companies. The largest five handle over 85 percent of the business in the country. It's the same case in the US.

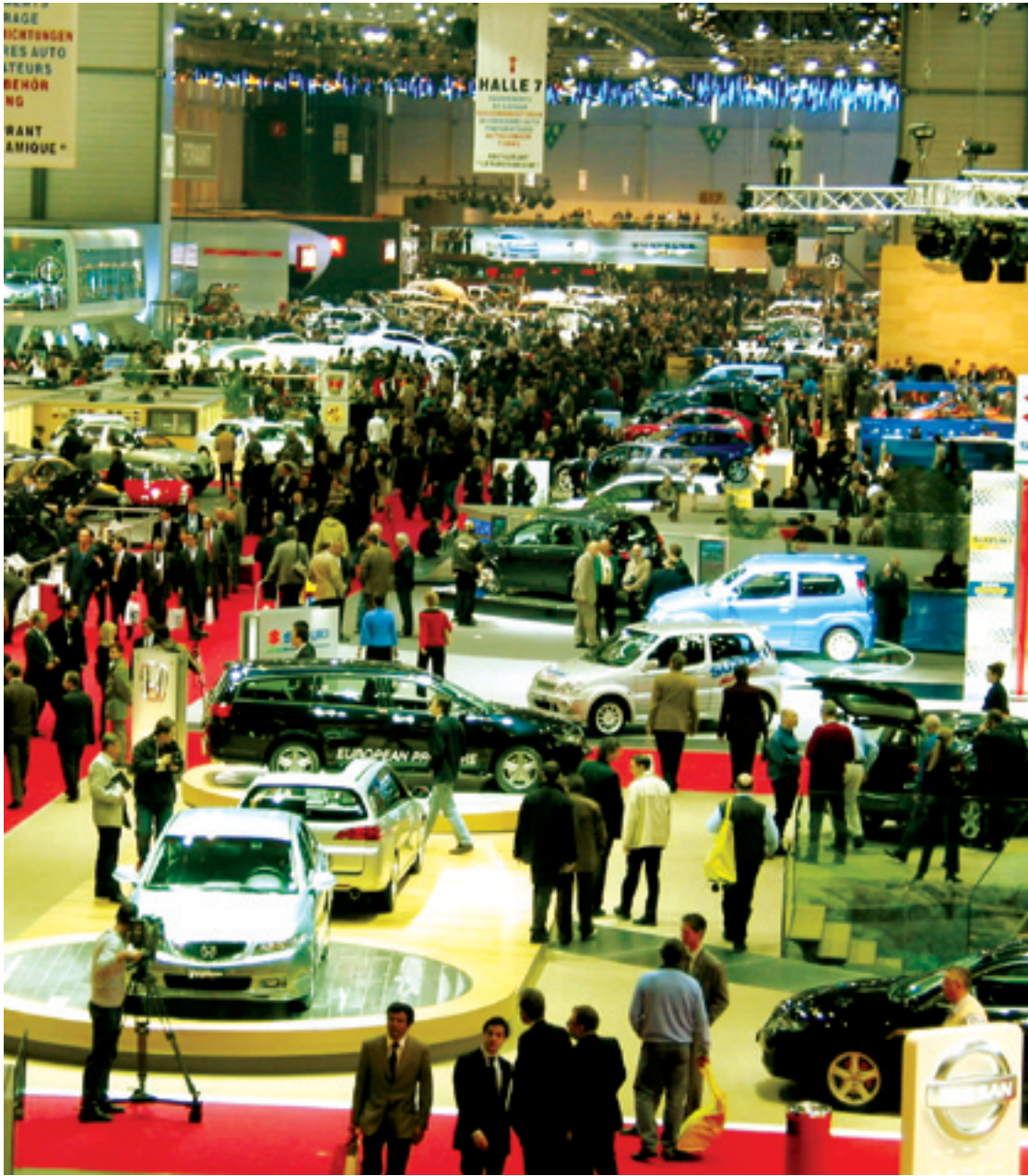
We'll see premium rates increasing, perhaps a two digit increase in the years to come. Insurance companies have to overcome the current difficulties and pushing up premiums is their best option.

**Tuo Guozhu, professor, Capital University of Economics and Business**

The worldwide economic depression and the increasing number of natural disasters and accidents in the past few years have also taken their toll.

In addition, insurance companies, particularly life insurers, used to invest their premium incomes in real estate, bonds and securities and long-term infrastructure construction to make profits. The slack economic conditions have made it harder to make any profit from these sectors.

China's insurance industry has not been affected. But this could change in the near future, dramatically perhaps, with overseas insurers exploring the virgin market ambitiously after China's entry to the WTO.



# Auto Carnival Revs Up

Media representatives gather in the main hall at the 73rd Geneva International Motor Show, Tuesday in Geneva, Switzerland. One of the greatest carnivals in the industry, this year's Motor Show offers an exhibition space of 76,000 square meters and attracts nearly all manufacturers worldwide. The show runs from March 6 to 16.

Xinhua Photo

# GCC Heading Towards Monetary Union

Kuwait, March 4 (Xinhua News Agency) - The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) of Arab states, announced today its currency subcommittee is to meet on March 14 to discuss the possible launch of a monetary union prior to 2010.

The GCC declared it had finished the first phase of the monetary union by the end of 2002: all six members have unified their import tariffs at an average of 5 percent; free mobility of goods and services has been allowed; and the member states have pegged their currencies to the US dollar.

The March 14 meeting will focus on the crite-



Though they failed to endorse a proposal calling on Saddam Hussein to step down, the Gulf Cooperation Council's six members decided to continue their economic integration process at their meeting earlier this week in Doha, and promised to meet again this month to discuss a monetary union blueprint.

Xinhua Photo

ria and fundamental issues concerning the issue of a unified currency, such as obligations and economic standards in member countries, who should be qualified before 2005. The remaining five years will be the third phase, in which necessary financial institutions should be established.

The establishment of a monetary union will create an important regional entity with a combined GDP of about \$335 billion, average per capita income of \$12,708, and 45 percent of the world's oil reserves.

But the six members have not reached agreement on the name of the new currency. Dinar, Riyal and Dirham are the options. Some members recommend "Hariji", which means gulf in Arabian.

## Analysts' Take:

**Xing Xudong, senior reporter, Xinhua News Agency in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**

The GCC consists of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Politically, the GCC needs to raise its voice on the world stage, because each member country is too small on its own. The European Union asked the six countries to form a group in negotiations with Europe.

A joint bloc will strengthen these countries' position in the turbulent Middle East.

Economically, the GCC realized it needs to take a more strong and direct approach to globalization.



# Ancient Bronzeware to Shine in Exhibition

By Sun Ming

A group of recently-unearthed bronzeware pieces, believed to be nearly 2,800-years-old, will be displayed at the China Millennium Monument in Beijing from Sunday to April 10.

The 27 artifacts, dating back to the Western Zhou Dynasty (1066 BC-771BC), were unearthed in Baoji, Shaanxi Province in January this year.

Archeologists are calling the bronzes a major discovery. "The engravings on the bronze pieces make them very valuable," Wang Hui, a researcher at the Shaanxi Archaeology Institute, told *Beijing Today*. "The characters engraved on them help fill the gap in historical materials from 1046 BC to 842 BC."

The pieces include plates, pots and cooking vessels, the largest of which is over half-a-meter tall. All together, there are around 3,500 characters engraved on the bronze items.

In September 2001, a Western

Zhou bronze piece engraved with 37 characters sold for \$924 at an auction in New York.

The relics were found by accident by five peasants from Mei County, Baoji, while digging up land on January 19. The group immediately reported their discovery to the local government.

For the unprecedented find, the governments of Shaanxi Province and Mei County presented the five people with total awards of 200,000 yuan, and they were invited to Beijing to attend the opening ceremony of the exhibition on Sunday.

According to the Shaanxi Archaeology Institute, the bronzeware belonged to a wealthy branch of the imperial family of the late Western Zhou Dynasty.

"The engravings record events in the family's history and reveal some aspects of society in the Zhou Dynasty," said Ma Chengyuan, head of the Shanghai Museum. The China Millennium Monument



Photo by Chen Bai

refused to reveal how and when the bronze ware will be transported to Beijing. "We're keeping such information a secret, because these pieces are very valuable," said Lin Xiaotao, director of the

monument's administration office.

However, Beijing Morning Post has reported that the archeological treasures will be transported from Baoji under tight protection by special police forces.



## Five-Star Birthday Bash

By Lily Li

It was five times the joy this Wednesday in Zhonghuan Plaza when a large group of people got together to celebrate the first birthdays of quintuplets born last year.

The three girls and two boys were born to Wang Cuiying, 33, on the morning of March 4, 2002 in Beijing Maternity Hospital, as reported in *Beijing Today* later that week.

All five year-old babies are healthy and weigh over 10 kilograms. "They were also premature infants. I once worried about their health a lot," said Jiao Baocun, their father, a farmer from Hejian Town in Hebei Province.

After the quintuplets were born, Jiao and Wang considered giving two or three up because they feared they did not have the means to raise all five. "Luckily, we've received help from society,

and that support has given us courage," said the proud father.

The five-fold birthday party was sponsored by Inner Mongolia-based Yili Group, a dairy giant that has donated supplies of 1,000 kilos of milk powder to cover the kids until they are seven years old and a sum of 50,000 yuan to go towards their medical expenses.

Photo by Jacky



Photo by Li Shuzhuan

## "Red Army" Posted at Restaurant

By Ivy Zhang

Six people, four men and two women, dressed in Red Army uniforms stand at attention and greet customers at the door of the Chishui River Restaurant on Xidan north street.

The Guizhou-style restaurant opened late last year and posted the mock Red Army soldiers at the door after Spring Festival this year.

The four young men are all 27-years-old and retired soldiers, while the two women were hired to "make it look more like the real Red Army, which consists of both men and women," according to restaurant manager Dong Jiamin.

In a departure from the authentic Red Army uniform, the six mascots also wear red sashes that read, "Live

a prosperous life, exalt the Red Army spirit".

"Because our restaurant is named Chishui River, we would like to inherit and promote the Red Army spirit," said Dong. The restaurant has a policy that all retired soldiers that provide state-issued proof of their past enlistment can get 100 yuan of free food.

The Chishui River in Guizhou is a major landmark in the Red Army's 12,500 kilometer epic Long March, made through Southwest China in the mid-1930s.

Local media reports have questioned the management's real intention in posting the faux soldiers and accused the restaurant of "playing with Chinese history."

## Mistaken Message Averts Tragedy

By Chen Ying

A mobile phone message mistakenly sent to a stranger, not a former boyfriend, ended up saving the life of a suicidal girl on Wednesday last week.

Kang Yong, vice-manager at the Beijing Fortune telecommunications company, was confused when he received a short mobile message at 5 pm that day from an out-of-town number. The message read: "For my love, what I got from you was apathy. Maybe the only way out is to escape."

At first Kang thought the message might be a prank. But, just in case, he replied with a message simply reading, "Who are you?" The response was, "Sorry, I made a mistake...I am going to die on the railway."

He immediately called the source of the message, and a crying girl answered. She told Kang, after he gently asked her, that she was in the second waiting hall of the Beijing Railway Station.

Kang and his colleague Zou Wei rushed out of their office and got in a cab to go to the station at 5:30 pm. On the road, they called the Beijing Railway Station Propaganda Department to seek help.

They reached the station 20 minutes later and started searching for the girl, accompanied by station employees. Meanwhile, Kang repeatedly called and sent messages to her. Finally, she answered.

Kang and Zou found the girl and spent half-an-hour persuading her against taking her own life. They were careful not to tell her she was basically surrounded by station employees and police to keep her from panicking or doing anything rash.

She said she came from Guangdong Province and was on the way to Jilin Province to finish her last semester in college. On her way North, she visited her boyfriend's home, but his family did not accept her. She then decided to commit suicide by jumping on the tracks when she got off her train in Beijing.

Gradually, as she talked to the two men, the girl calmed down. She boarded train T271 from Beijing to Jilin, and then sent Kang another message as the train was leaving the station: "Don't worry about me. I believe tomorrow will be a better day. I'll never be able to thank you enough."

## Who Were Those Masked Men?

By Ivy Zhang

When more than ten suspected criminals stepped out of local court vehicles on Monday morning, each had his head covered in a black mask with small openings for the eyes and mouth.

This is a new measure adopted by the Beijing No.1 Intermediate People's Court aimed at protecting the privacy of criminal suspects and following what is already common practice in many other countries.

"When criminal cases are being tried in the courtroom, defendants are identified as suspects before they are judged as being guilty. Putting masks over their heads is a way of showing respect for suspects' legal rights, which reflects the civilization of our judicial system," said Li Yongle, team head of court security.

An added benefit of the masks is keeping defendants in one case from collusion when making confessions, according to the court.

Late last year, the Shenzhen Intermediate Court was the first in China to use these kinds of masks.

While admitting the masks are a step forward, some Chinese legal experts have made anonymous comments in local newspapers that in truly protecting suspects' rights, substance is more important than form.



Court police escort one of Beijing's first masked suspects to trial on Monday.

Photo by Li Shuzhuan

## Wet Thief to Dry Off in Prison

By Lily Li

A trick that works in the movies proved less useful to a thief last year. Xu Qiansong, a farmer from Anhui Province, tried to hide from local police after committing a robbery by diving into the icy Liangma River last October, but could only stand two hours in the water and was then arrested.

On Thursday last week, the Chaoyang District People's Court sentenced him to six years in prison and a fine of 12,000 yuan.

As he was being led out of the courtroom after sentencing, Xu muttered to himself, "The water was too cold! I had to get out, I was going numb."

At 10 pm on October 9 last year, a young couple was robbed at knife-point by three men, including Xu, near the Lufthansa Shopping Center. After the two victims turned over 1,900 yuan and a mobile phone, the perpetrators fled in different directions.

The couple immediately started screaming, "Robbery," and police officers, security personnel and civilians nearby chased the three thieves.

To avoid capture, Xu dove into the nearby river. The police carefully searched the area, but because it was dark, could not locate him. A small group stayed on the banks of the river to wait. At 2 am the next morning, Xu was forced to throw in the towel and emerged from the water, at which point he was quickly apprehended.



Photo by Cheng Jie



Photo by Song Xingguo

## Mock Mermaid Gets Water Wings

By Su Wei

Song Shi, 25, has been struggling through scuba diving lessons at the Beijing Aquarium since last weekend. She is preparing to be one of the six performers in a "mermaid" show at the aquarium on March 8, International Women's Day.

"It's really cool to be able to dive into the deep water and feed the fish. But I got a little nervous the first time a large turtle came swimming over," she said. Song added that under the tutelage of coach Yang Daoming from the aquarium, she has controlled her fear and is excited about the performance.



# Still Learning from Lei Feng?

## Dead hero discussed again

By Chen Ying

A lot of people have been talking this week about a person who died 41 years ago. His name is Lei Feng.

Lei Feng was an orphan and later a People's Liberation Army soldier in the 1960s. He became a hero by performing good deeds in his low rank of squad leader. His greatest desire in life was to be nothing more than "a revolutionary screw that never rusts". He did things like giving his meager savings to the parents of a fellow soldier who had been hit by a flood, washing his fellow soldier's feet after a long march and helping old people.

Though many westerners think Lei Feng was an icon of the Cultural Revolution, he died in an accident at the age of 22 on August 15, 1962, four years before the revolution came. For his continuous "serving the people wholeheartedly" (全心全意为人民服务), Mao Zedong published an inscription "向雷锋同志学习" (Learn from Comrade Lei Feng) in *People's Daily* on March 5, 1963. Since then, every March, the Chinese continue to commemorate the Lei Feng spirit.

For the past forty years, Lei Feng's story has influenced millions of Chinese across several generations though people have come to different understandings about him in different eras.

This year, people are remembering him around the country in different ways. More than 90 kinds of books about Lei Feng have been displayed in Beijing Book Building at Xidan, Xicheng District recently. *The Collected Edition of Lei Feng* has been selling nicely.

*The Song of Lei Feng*, a book written by 19-year-old author Zhang Tiantian, was published last month by Liaoning People's Press in Shenyang. "Like all my peers, I've been encouraged to learn from Lei Feng ever since I was a child," said Zhang.

It is not just a local topic. AP published an article with the title of 'Spirit of Lei Feng' Revived on March 2. Dusted off and updated, AP says Lei Feng is being promoted as an example of cheerful self-sacrifice by Chinese leaders who



Lei Feng wore a watch when he sat together with Zhu Yushan, former vice-director of the political department of Shenyang Army Unit.



The watch now stays in the Lei Feng Museum in Fushun, Liaoning Province.

worry economic reform has fed social tensions and made Chinese people selfish.

Despite ceaseless promotion of Lei Feng by the government

and media, many people think Lei Feng's "screw spirit" is out of date among the prosperous markets and glitzy skyscrapers of modern China.

A number of recent reports have found that people want to understand Lei Feng as an ordinary person, not just the deified figure he's always been held up to be.

The Lei Feng museum has just reopened in Fushun, Liaoning Province displaying some exciting new memorabilia, including a photo showing Lei Feng wearing a watch. It's the first time this photo has been published after being hidden for more than forty years.

What do people think about Lei Feng spirit today? Does anyone still need to learn about Lei Feng? Opinions follow:

**Yafeng Lee, graduate student in the Art History Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts**

Do we really understand Lei Feng? We have heard so much in

the promotion of Lei's spirit that we can forget even a hero needs to laugh, cry and get angry. Also as an individual, he would have had his own love and hatred.

Who was Lei Feng? The army had to break its rules to enroll him as he was only 1.54 meters in height. He had only just graduated from primary school. He liked to show some hair on his forehead when he wore his service cap. He liked to take photos.

Now we even know he once pulled on a leather jacket and wore a watch. So we know he was not stupid. On the contrary, he was one of the few people at that time who could understand aesthetics and pursue beauty.

Some of Lei's behavior seems different to today's notions of a hero. It's hard for contemporary teenagers to understand why his mind was so innocent and simple.

We should adjust the way we learn from Comrade Lei. It's ridiculous to just copy his diary mechanically though many of his quotes still sound wise even today.

**Zhang Jirong, Internet surfer**

Actually, people no longer regard Lei Feng as a deity thanks to the education we have received since the beginning of the 1980s. Now in most people's minds, Lei Feng is only a model to help common people understand how to make uncommon achievements.

Lei Feng is the symbol of a generation. So, just like we always keep and cherish our childhood good memories, Lei Feng spirit will remain. What we should do today is to absorb and understand the loftiness and grandeur of his spirit as something to inspire us.

**Dr. Stefan Landsberger, lecturer in the Department of Chinese Studies of Leiden University, the Netherlands**

I think Lei Feng spirit has some commendable aspects. Not for political reasons, but more from the perspective that is also stressed by youth organizations such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, i.e. that one should try and do at least one good deed every day, preferably by helping other people. It doesn't have to be anything grand, and it certainly should be devoid of any political considerations.

Thanks to his former co-soldier Qiao Anshan, and the book *the Day Lei Feng Left* (Likai Lei Feng de rizi), we all know that Lei was no martyr, and that he died in an ordinary accident.

If you define Lei Feng spirit as being decent to other people and helping them, people still need it today. But do the Chinese, who have had Lei shoved down their throats for almost 40 years, still need him? Hasn't Lei Feng been used too much, for too many wrong purposes?

I think Lei Feng spirit would gain in effectiveness if it was only used to spread the example of helping other people. Lei Feng becomes quite difficult to believe when he is presented for other purposes, as has happened in the recent past.

Photos provided by Yu Xin

By Lily Li

It was the first time anyone had suggested to Zhao Dongdong or any of his army comrades that they shouldn't risk trying to stop a thief.

While he was on duty at the gate of a Chengdu army office on Saturday morning, Zhao Dongdong, 20, a soldier from Heilongjiang Province, saw several people chasing a young man with long hair. They were shouting "He's a thief! Catch him!" Without any hesitation, Zhao Dongdong rushed out and chased the thief.

The thief was exhausted by the time he got to the gate of Southwest University for Nationalities so he turned to confront his pursuer. The man threw away the money in the bag he had stolen, trying to distract Zhao's attention. At the same time, he whipped out a knife and stabbed it towards the soldier.

Zhao Dongdong was ready for him and gave the thief a swift kick. He then seized the man's long hair and quickly subdued him.

A crowd had gathered and they all applauded Zhao Dongdong after his glorious victory. One of the bystanders was Eric Johnson, a 52-year-old American, studying at the Business School of Southwest University for Nationalities.

Johnson had watched the whole incident from the beginning. "The thief tried to steal a bicycle from in front of a convenience shop. I did notice he had something in his hand which he put in his pocket be-

# Man's Gotta Do...

fore the workers started to run after him," he said.

He told *Beijing Today* he was surprised to see the soldier chase after the thief immediately, regardless of the risk of injury. He was shocked and he stood watching as Zhao Dongdong took the thief off to the police station. Later, Johnson went to the army office, hoping to congratulate the young soldier.

He was disappointed when he found out soldiers couldn't meet guests while on duty, according to army rules, so he wrote a letter to the army unit to show his opinions about the soldier's behavior.

"The army sentry did a very good job. Though not knowing whether the thief had a knife or another weapon, he chased and caught him. I would have helped but as an American I wasn't sure if it would be OK. If I caught the thief I could have been sued. But basically my good wishes to the soldier," he wrote in the letter.

"I hope my letter is of use to give (what we call in the Navy) an 'Attaboy' to the soldier who was doing his normal duty on a not-so-normal day. I write this for him and his immediate officer in charge, saying 'Attaboy' to him, good job," Mr. Johnson later explained to *Beijing Today*.

But he also said if he had been that soldier, he might not have taken the same risk. "A soldier should know how to protect himself before trying to protect others," he said.

Zhao Dongdong and his comrades didn't see it the same way.

"All our soldiers will dash out under that situation! When the safety of national assets or people's lives are threatened, our soldiers surely come out boldly, never thinking about their own safety first," said Xie Changjiang, a supervisor in the local Police Communication Team. He said the regiment had given an order for Zhao Dongdong to be praised for his brave behavior. Xie is also applying for Zhao to receive the lofty honor of "Third-class Merit".

### Opinions Conflict

**Zhao Dongdong**

As a soldier, I've just done what I was supposed to do. I never thought of any possible injuries before catching the thief, and I don't think about it now. "Doing good needs, even when risky" is a traditional Chinese quality, and it's my honor to follow in this tradition.

I'm proud of catching the

thief, because I stopped him from stealing more money and injuring other people. Even if I had got hurt during this process, I wouldn't regret it.

I understand what Eric Johnson thinks. This is part of the education he received in a country where personal security is the most important thing. This is just a difference in ideology.

I'm grateful for his suggestions, but I'll never flinch in fear of pain, nor will my comrades! Standing in the gap is always the army's tradition.

**Eric Johnson**

I suspect there is little basic difference between Chinese soldier's lives and ours except for what soldiers think of safety. But the rewards for doing your best for your country is the same I notice here as it was for me back in the States. It is our own personal respect and dignity to do well to honor our country, our community and our family that drives us. In all these "job" positions, we look out for each other. When one person or family needs help we all chip in to help.

But before we help others, we should find out if we can help; that is, we should take the risks and dangers into consideration

at the first step.

It is not easy to be a professional soldier in China. Those who are assigned sentry duty seem to have to stand at too rigid attention. And it seems they have to be willing to sacrifice their lives wherever there's a need.

This soldier, without consideration of his personal safety ran after the thief who could

### SOUND BITES

"We should continue to take developing agriculture and the rural economy and increasing farmers' income as the top priority of our economic work."

— China's Premier Zhu Rongji, reading a long list of "outstanding difficulties and problems" from his 55-page state-of-the-nation report to the National People's Congress Wednesday.

"One country shouldn't imagine that it can win the war alone, we can only build peace together."

— French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said that even if Washington and its allies strike Iraq without UN backing,

they would need international support in the aftermath. Meanwhile, the foreign ministers of France, Germany and Russia said Wednesday they will block any attempt to get UN approval for war against Iraq.

"It's hard to overstate how significant this is. It's a wonderful blow to inflict on al-Qaida."

— White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, regarding the arrest Saturday of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, a senior operative in Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, and two other men outside the Pakistani capital of Islamabad.

By Chen Ying



By Su Wei

A small, but not insignificant piece of history belongs to Bao Zhengzhao, a farmer from Cangnan County, Zhejiang Province. According to China's media, he was the first person ever to sue the government. He lost his case in 1988 against the local government which had pulled down his house after declaring it had been built illegally.

One year later, the Seventh National People's Congress passed a law — China's Administrative Procedural Law — aiming to provide a legal basis for citizens to sue the government when its specific administrative actions such as detaining, fining or confiscation were regarded by ordinary people as a violation of their rights. The law took effect on October 1, 1990.

On his deathbed fourteen years later, Bao, 74, told his family to continue the struggle. "I lost the case but I have no regrets, thanks to the effect it had. You too need to study law and obey law."

The former county head, Huang Deyu, who had attended the court hearing on behalf of the government, expressed his admiration for Bao. "The significance of that case is that people's awareness of the law has been strengthened and they can use the law to protect their rights."

A recent working conference organized by the Ministry of Justice found that in the last five years, around 500,000 people have sued the government. "2001 was the first year when the number of cases lodged surpassed 100,000," says Li Guoguang, vice president of the Supreme Court. The number was less than 30,000 in 1992.

In Beijing last year, the number of such cases was nearly 2,000, 40 percent up from 1999. So suing the government is becoming more popular. But is it working?

#### "Successful" suit?

One of the most common reasons for suing the Government is people getting angry at the state not doing its duty for ordinary people.

In 2000, 100 farmers from Zhongcun Village in Yongjia County, Zhejiang Province decided to sue the county government as it had taken no action to resolve their dispute with another nearby village.

Chen Zheng, one of the village representatives, says Kaiyang Village cut off Zhongcun's water source and diverted it to their village. "We did not want to fight with them, as that would have brought nothing but bloodshed." He says when they asked the government to solve the dispute the response was that a reservoir would be built. "We are in a mountainous area. It is very dry. How would it be possible to find underground water and



# Taking on the Government

build a reservoir? In fact, the government did nothing after telling us this plan."

Convinced the authorities weren't going to bother helping them, villagers of Zhongcun Village lodged a lawsuit against the government at Wenzhou People's Secondary Court on March 3, 2000. They won the case and the county government was requested to "take some action." After that, surprisingly, nothing happened. "They still didn't do anything," says Chen.

Since then, Chen and his fellow villagers have sued the government four times, taking their case to the Higher People's Court of Zhejiang. "Each time we won, but..." Chen says no more.

"We don't want to cause trouble for the government," he says. "We just want the government to

undertake their obligations and do what they are supposed to do. Otherwise we can hardly call them 'parents for the ordinary people.'"

#### Is there any point?

A Mr. Feng, who was unwilling to disclose his full name, told Beijing Today he once lodged a law suit at a local court in Beijing after his business operation license and television were confiscated by the local industry and commercial administration bureau after he fought with the son of the bureau's director. "The bureau told me that everything could be solved easily as long as I withdrew the case. I did not give up at first as I had done nothing wrong. It was the son who started the dispute. The bureau had no reason to confiscate my license. But in the end I had no choice but to give up." Feng refused

to talk any more about the case, simply saying that "I still need to make a living here. I still want to have my own business."

A taxi driver, requesting anonymity, who is to lodge a lawsuit against the transportation department in Beijing, says he has little confidence lodging a case will work. "But I want to try it anyway."

Zhou Hanhua, professor of the Law Research Institute of China's Academy of Social Sciences, says traditional Chinese culture is the reason more people don't lodge suits. "In China there is a saying — never be a thief even if you're dying of hunger and never lodge a lawsuit against the government even if you're dying from being wronged. People think lodging a lawsuit is as bad as being a thief," he says. "Another

saying is 'a temporary win will bring losses for ever.'"

Few of the people interviewed by Beijing Today believe winning a case would actually do them any good.

Wu Boliang, from Jiangxi Province, never realized that he would be swamped by debts even if he won his case against the local authorities.

In a contract signed with the local government in 1993, he was given permission to manage a garden of 300 mu over a period of five years and the government would be responsible for the operating costs. But the government only paid the first two years' expenses. Wu had to borrow about 470,000 yuan to cover the expenses. "When I asked the government to pay the money, they told me to 'believe in the government. When have you ever heard of the government breaking its promises?' By the end of 1999, they still hadn't paid me the money. But the lenders came to ask for their money back." He says he then sued the government. He won and the government was ordered to pay up. They didn't. "They still haven't paid me. I have no money to pay the debt. The only way out for me is to die!"

#### Disrespect

Zhou Hanhua says the increase in the number of ordinary people suing the government may not be as groundbreaking as it sounds. "There are still a lot of difficulties for ordinary people in suing the government. It should be noticed that some cases are rejected by the court from the very beginning."

Twice-monthly Talk, an official Party magazine, conducted a sur-

vey in early 2000 which found that nearly 50 percent of people in China do not know there is a legal basis for them to sue the government and they believe that "it is against the law to sue the government."

The magazine also says that "in some provinces, 62 percent of people simply wouldn't dare to sue the government."

Zhou attributes this lack of faith in the law to the "too close relationship between the courts and the government."

He points out that the personnel and financial conditions of the courts are usually under the control of the government, which enables it to interfere with the investigation and judgement. "When the court does not stick to the principle that 'law is their only superior', the court then becomes merely an attachment of the government. For the court, the will of government officials is often the most important consideration. The role of the court in this situation is not to protect the public interest but to protect the powerful people."

Local governments have shown themselves to be fairly disdainful of the whole process. Usually, officials don't attend hearings in which the government is being sued. For example, in Huichang County, Jiangxi Province, 95 percent of 200 cases against the government between 1989 and 2000 were not attended by anyone from the accused government departments. A vice director of a local government financial bureau in Guangdong, once sued by the local people, says most government officials are used to either not attending court hearings or later denying having lost the case. "I don't understand why these local people are so enthusiastic about suing the government. Don't they realize their cases discredit the government? And why don't they think about us officials - we work for the government and for the people. But when there is something wrong we ourselves are the ones who are supposed to show up in court. It is humiliating!" He says officials who are being sued don't attend court, because in this way, the court loses face rather than them.

The spread of such ideas among government officials is the reason why sometimes the court does not open at all, according to Zhou. "Some government departments are afraid or unwilling to be seen as the accused party in a court. In some provinces, the local governments force ordinary people to back down, by making some kind of deal or in some cases fining them as much as 200,000 yuan if they dare to lodge a lawsuit."

Zhou says that no matter what excuses the government has for not attending court hearings, it shows that officials of these departments tend to think that "ordinary people are not worthy of being given face or dignity."

Zhou says it is a pity that the government should ignore ordinary people's rights. "No matter what the result is in court, the ordinary people will have spent time and money to muster their case. Is there anything for the government to lose by attending? Nothing at all. They just need to fulfil the obligations they are supposed to have."

He emphasizes that endless litigation is far from ideal. "Law is the bottom line of social justice. If people continually have to resort to legal cases to solve their problems, it suggests a situation of social disorder and inefficiency of governmental management and administration."

Photo / Tony Stone

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By Ivy Zhang

Two farmers from Yunnan Province, Liu Huafu, 21, and his accomplice Zhou Chaojie, 25, benefited from the latest advance in China's judicial system last Thursday afternoon.

The two had been sentenced to death for trafficking and transporting heroine but instead of facing the firing squad they were executed via lethal injection.

It marks the beginning of a program in Yunnan to phase out shooting and replace it with a more humane method of dispatch.

The two men died peacefully within one minute in an Iveco-converted van. The authorities decided to use vans as mobile execution units due to the size of Yunnan province.

"The use of lethal injection shows that China's death penalty system is becoming more civilized and humane," said Zhao Shijie, President of Yunnan Provincial High Court, at a work conference on lethal injection last Thursday morning.

Following the meeting, eighteen specially converted Iveco execution vans, each worth over 500,000 yuan, were distributed to Yunnan's 17 intermediate courts and one high court. The authorities are considering setting up fixed execution rooms in Yunnan in the future.

Other areas, including Beijing, are making preparations to adopt lethal injection.

#### Leading the way

Yunnan was one of the first

# Death, Yunnan Style



Mobile execution vans

Photo by Wang Tianwen/Zhang Xiaohui

provinces in China to adopt lethal injection after Chinese criminal law was revised on January 1, 1997.

The revision stipulated that the death penalty could be carried out either by gun shot or lethal injection. In China, only intermediate and higher courts are entitled to hand down death penalties. District courts are restricted to a sentence of up to 15 years in prison.

The first lethal injection was administered on March 28, 1997. So far, "a total of 112 injection cases have been successfully conducted at Kunming Intermediate People's Court," the Yunnan-based *Metropolitan Times* reports.

"It's taken a long time to perfect the system because it involves many considerations like

medicine for injection and technical factors," says Pei Jin, deputy director of criminal justice at Yunnan High Court.

"We did a lot of experiments and tests. We can not say our lethal injection system is well-developed yet, but it is satisfactory," Pei said. The lethal cocktail injected into the condemned is developed and made in China. Pei declined to reveal the substance of the medicine.

#### A big leap forward?

Lethal injection is meant to reduce the suffering and psychological pressure for criminals.

Death by firing squad is more bloody, as well as less efficient. It can sometimes take several minutes for the criminal to die after being shot.

"I have witnessed execution both by gun-shot and lethal injection," Pei said. "I think injection is more civilized. It is definitely a big leap forward in our judicial system."

Pei says another reason lethal injection is preferable to shooting is that it involves less manpower and lower costs.

With lethal injection, only four people are required to execute the death penalty, one executioner, one member of the court, one from the procuratorate and one forensic doctor. A dozen guards are also required to keep watch around the van.

In contrast, many more guards are needed for firing squads, both around the site and along the route from the prison to the site for the execution. If the case is well known and complicated, security needs to be further enhanced and extra expenses are incurred.

But not all Chinese legal experts think lethal injection is a great advance for China.

Chen Xingliang, legal professor at Peking University, said, "I think the significance of lethal injection is very limited. Of course, it is an advance in terms of methods used in execution. But the fact that so many people are executed is a far more important consideration. It would be hypocritical to herald this as a wonderful advance."

The number of criminals executed every year in China is highly confidential. "But foreigners would consider it an enormous figure. In other countries, perhaps 20 people are executed every year. We kill thousands of criminals every year. This figure can not be admitted to," says Chen.

#### Innocent victims?

Pei said that as far as he knows, no one has been wrongly executed in Yunnan since 1997.

"It is our goal to be 100% accurate in our judgments," Pei said reassuringly. Like every provincial high court, Yunnan High Court is authorized to review a death penalty and make a final decision on it.

But Chen believes that incorrect death sentences cannot be avoided.

"From 1997 to now, there must have been wrong executions. But it is hard to say in public. This is a very complicated issue," he said.

Chinese law used to require that every death penalty had to be reviewed and approved by the State Supreme Court.

But in 1980, the Supreme Court handed this authority to provincial high courts.

"This has compromised the death penalty review procedure," says Chen. "The death penalty no longer has proper guarantees in terms of legal process."

#### Abolish the death penalty?

The death penalty in China, and the numbers of people involved, has long been a target of international human rights groups.

Nearly 100 countries in the world still use the death penalty today. But will China ever abolish it? Chen believes it will be hard. What China can do, he says, is to reduce the number of people who are sentenced to death.

"Chinese criminal law lists about 320 charges, 68 of which can result in the death penalty, i.e. nearly one in seven charges can lead to execution. The number of people executed here could well be higher than anywhere else in the world," said Chen.

But few Chinese legal scholars think it is necessary to abolish the death penalty. Most of them say it is necessary, citing the following reasons:

○ Crime is a serious problem in China and it is difficult to maintain social order. The death penalty can deter criminals.

○ It is a traditional and common belief among Chinese people that those who kill others should forfeit their own lives. Neither the victim's families nor society could accept any other punishment.

Chen agrees the death penalty is a more potent deterrent than other punishments. "But the problem is that we have exaggerated its force."

There are many complaints in China's legal circles that too many people are sentenced to death.

By Sun Ming

The yew tree was declared to be endangered in China in 1999 and it was forbidden to destroy them.

But that didn't stop Yunnan Hande Biological Technology Company processing a unique chemical compound from the trees, resulting in the destruction of more than 400,000 of them since 1993.

The heads of the company were thrown in prison in October last year. Yunnan Forestry Public Security Bureau told *Beijing Today* this week that the problem of people destroying the endangered tree was now under control.

The bark and leaves of yew trees contain a compound which can be refined into Taxol, a kind of medicine which can help fight cancer. Because of this, and because it takes hundreds of years for the slow-growing yew to develop into a tree, efforts have been made to protect the yew since 1999.

According to China's conventions for wild plants, it is forbidden to cut, sell or buy endangered plants or trees.

But even after 1999, Kunming-based Yunnan Hande Biological Technology Company continued its lucrative Taxol production even though it involved the destruction of thousands of precious trees.

Taxol, which can only be extracted from yew, especially its bark, is a high-grade pharmaceutical product. The scarcity of the source means it is even more expensive than gold in the international market.

In the American market, one kilogram of gold costs about \$10,000 - one kilogram of Taxol costs \$300,000.

Because of the complexity of the refining process, there are only a few companies in China capable of producing Taxol and Yunnan Hande used to be the largest.

New methods are becoming available to manufacture small quantities of Taxol, but the easiest method, and the best way to produce it in industrial quantity is simply to strip trees of their bark. The unfortunate side effect is that the tree then dies.

In October last year, the heads of Yunnan Hande were sentenced to prison terms of between three and 18 years for funding this process.

The verdict at Shilin Yi Nationality Autonomous County in Yunnan Province is believed to be the toughest ever imposed by a Chinese court for such a case.

#### Local government involved

In 1995 Yunnan Hande Biological Technology, a Sino-American

# Chopping Down the Trees



The Yew tree

Company, spent 1,000,000 yuan to buy the patent for a method of production of Taxol from Yunnan Plant Institute.

In order to get rich resources of yew trees, Yunnan Hande began to cooperate with the Forestry Bureau of Lijiang County in 1996 and established Lijiang Hande Company, Yunnan Hande taking a 60 percent stake and Lijiang Forest Bureau taking the rest.

"People in the Lijiang area would collect the bark of yew trees for Lijiang Hande, and the company then processed them into chloroform for Yunnan Hande," He

Guangwu, deputy director of Lijiang Forestry Bureau, told CCTV.

Chloroform is a kind of semi-manufactured product which can be refined into Taxol.

"We just wanted to make use of the rich resources in our Lijiang Area," He Guangwu explained.

According to China Forestry Bureau, Yunnan Province has three million yew trees, 55 percent of the total in the whole country. Of these, 1.1 millions yew trees are in Lijiang.

"From 1996 to 1999, Lijiang Hande collected hundreds of tons of the yew bark, which means

that more than 100,000 yew trees were destroyed," Wang Weibin, deputy director of Yunnan Forestry Science Academy, told *Beijing Today*. "All the yew trees that were peeled off died at once."

Lijiang Forestry Public Security Bureau shut down Lijiang Hande in 1999, ending that source of chloroform for Yunnan Hande.

So Yunnan Hande found other ways of collecting chloroform, and continued making Taxol and exporting it to America, its main market. Yunnan Hande's Taxol was approved by the US Food and Drug Agency in 1999. The com-

pany signed contracts worth \$72 million in 2000 with American enterprises.

At this point, Yunnan Hande was reportedly the second largest Taxol manufacturer in the world. **Illegal processing plants and venders**

After Lijiang Hande was shut down in 1999, Yunnan Hande looked to local processing plants and venders instead.

Ma Hongguo, who had been buying bark of yew trees in his grocery store in Kunming, was arrested in 2001.

"I was captured within 20 days of starting this kind of business," said Ma. "I had already collected 16 tons of bark altogether."

"There were lots of places in Kunming buying yew tree bark," Ma added.

Xu Zijun, the boss of a processing plant, collected bark of yew trees from farmers. He was arrested in Kunming in 2001.

"I produced 100 kilograms of chloroform and sold it all to Yunnan Hande."

Xu said he spent just 10 yuan buying one kilogram of the bark of yew trees. After processing it, he could sell chloroform for 1,900 yuan per kilogram to Yunnan Hande.

Wu Jun, the chairman of Yunnan Hande, denied his guilt in court. "The resource of our company was not yew trees but chloroform. It is only banned to buy or sell yew tree," he said.

"I don't know and I don't care where the bark came from. Maybe from the aspect of ethics, we were wrong. But we are an enterprise. Earning money is the point of an enterprise," Wu told CCTV.

Yunnan Hande was fined 20 million yuan after being found guilty of illegal management and export of 68 kilograms of Taxol worth 96 million yuan between September 1999 and November 2001. The company was ordered to close in November 2001.

In October last year, chairman Wu Jun was sentenced to 18 years in jail for his role in the case. He was also fined two million yuan.

Two deputy presidents of the company, Li Song and Qi Ying, were also sentenced to nine and seven years in jail respectively.

The court also ordered the confiscation of 13 kilograms of Taxol found at the company's premises during the investigation.

#### Destroying thousand-year-old trees

Yunnan Hande produced and exported about 140 kilograms of Taxol altogether from 1993.

Yunnan Forestry Bureau said that one kilogram of bark of yew trees contains 0.0001 kilograms of Taxol, so 140 kilograms of Taxol needs 1,400 tons of bark. As

every yew tree has about 3 kilograms of bark, this 140 kilograms of Taxol would require bark from at least 460,000 yew trees.

Lijiang Forestry Bureau said that 213,000 yew trees were destroyed in Lijiang area before 1999, 30 percent of the yew trees in the area.

"It only takes a few hours to destroy an old yew tree which has taken hundreds of years to grow," Wang Daming, an expert from Yunnan Forestry Science Academy, told CCTV. "The oldest yew I've seen that had been destroyed by someone peeling off its bark was a 1200-year-old tree. I can't describe my sorrow when I saw it."

The yew tree has been on earth for more than a billion years. The diameter of the average tree grows by one millimeter a year.

Despite this, local people have long been happy to make money from the trees. You used to be able to find cups made of yew from Yunnan Province. The sellers claimed the cups could prevent cancer.

"That's nonsense," said Wang Weibin, deputy director of the Yunnan Forestry Science Academy. "There's only 0.01 percent of Taxol in the bark of a yew tree. And Taxol doesn't dissolve in water."

#### Farmer investigates

Zhang Chunshan, who lives in Lijiang, began to investigate the destruction of yew trees from 2000. He has been to seven counties in Lijiang, taking photographs.

"I have been threatened by many illegal venders," Zhang told CCTV. "I often reported my investigation to our local forestry bureau and police."

Zhang said he hadn't realized that this illegal activity was so rampant in Yunnan.

"It's quicker to peel the bark off a yew than to cut the tree down," said Ma. "You can destroy hundreds of trees in one day by peeling off their bark."

#### The plantation of yew trees in Yunnan Province

"The yew tree has very high medicinal value, and we should use it. But now the tree is endangered, so we must inspire the plantation of new trees," said Ji Jianwei, director of the administration office of China Forestry Bureau.

After four or five years, part of the baby yew tree above the ground can be cut for use. "Then the tree can continue growing," Wang Weibin, deputy director of the academy, told *Beijing Today*.

Wang said that plantation of yew trees in Yunnan Province began in the early 1990s in Yunnan and 130,000 yew trees have been planted since 1990.



# Opening the Door to the Opium Kingdom

By Zhang Huan

You've probably heard of the Golden Triangle in Southeast Asia, but you may not have heard of the Wa people. The Wa are one of the most feared hill tribes in this shadowy area on the border of Burma, Laos and Thailand only a few hours from China. It's an ideal position to spread the local specialty throughout the neighboring countries: opium. The Golden Triangle is the world's second largest producer of opium, next to Afghanistan. The Wa also have their own 20,000 strong army to protect themselves. Their territory has ideal geological and climatic conditions for growing poppies, and yields more than 20 percent of the world's supply of opium.

Han Yunfeng, an independent documentary producer, has been paying close attention to the Golden Triangle since 1994. He not only records the changes of the opium economy but also takes an active part in the process of helping to get rid of opium in Wa state. In the last eight years, he has documented and publicized the efforts of the local people to move to different crops. In his words, "I feel a kind of responsibility."

## Entering the Golden Triangle

Han first came to the area in 1985 when he was 23 and an art student at Capital Normal University. He came to sketch at the border area between China and Laos and lived with a Dai family. The husband was named Ai Lun and he had a cousin living across the border in Laos, named Ai Mai. "Ai Mai was still a teenager at that time and sometimes he came to stay with his cousin for a few days. I was very curious about this boy who didn't speak much," Han said. Ai Lun told Han that Ai Mai lived in the Golden Triangle and he planted poppies. Han could not believe it. "How could a poppy grower be so poor?" He could not relate such a simple and shy boy to the Golden Triangle, poppies and opium.

Ai Mai was the first poppy planter Han had ever met. He became interested in the area and continued visiting Ai Lun's family in the following years, observing their life from the perspective of a painter.

Han's contact with the opium business began in 1994. A friend

of his working for Yunnan TV was invited to go to Wa state in northern Burma to make a documentary about the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and drugs. Han accompanied him and was shocked by what he saw. In the northern hill areas, poppies were planted everywhere. People

were on the verge of starvation despite the incredible international value of heroin. The farmers who grow the poppies are subjected to notoriously cruel punishment from the local racket bosses if they take any opium for themselves.

In 1997, Han took his digital video camera to the border area of China and Laos and began shooting. His first subject was the real life of Ai Lun and Ai Mai. "I wanted to approach the drug economy from the angle of a local family," says Han. "There's such a strong contrast between the cousins: Ai Lun, the elder one in China plants rice and sugarcane while Ai Mai in Laos plants only poppies and lives a much poorer life with an annual income of less than 1,000 yuan. I would never have thought that the income from growing poppies was less than for sugarcane but that is the truth. Ai Lun is trying to help his cousin substitute sugarcane for poppies."

Soon after he began shooting, Han attended a meeting on nationalities across the border, organized by Yunnan Association for the Promotion of Development of West China. During the meeting, the subject of developing an alternative economy to replace opium was discussed, which awoke Han's interest. "I realized that my subject should be wider and more detailed. This is a big subject." After the meeting, Han visited the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and met its leader Bao Youxiang. Han asked him, "May I film you till 2005?" Bao answered, "Yes."

## Chairman Bao's intentions

Bao, or Chairman Bao as he likes to be known, has made a pledge that by 2005, opium production will be eradicated in Wa state. It's a pledge which has met with considerable skepticism around the world. Bao and several of his family members who have senior positions in the UWSA are reported to have each been making as much as \$500 million a year from the drug trade. The US State De-



Han shoots the opium planters working in the poppy field.



The prevailing currency in opium trade in Wa state is British silver coins from over a hundred years ago.



The cousins Ai Lun and Ai Mai (right) in Laos



Chairman Bao talks about his relocation project to Han and his partners. Photos provided by Han Yunfeng

partment describes the UWSA as the world's "most heavily armed narco-traffickers." A recent UN report on the Wa people also stated that opium production will remain "the economic backbone of the villagers," so long as the UWSA holds sway.

Han feels the outside world has misconceived ideas about the Wa people and Bao, with whom he has built up a friendship during his filming. "The outside world doesn't know Bao," he says. Han believes the UWSA is making genuine efforts to rid the community of poppy growing. In Bao's words, "Our small state doesn't want to be an enemy of the world."

But Han knows that changing will be difficult. According to an investigation by the UN Drug Control Program in Meng Bo County of Wa state, the average annual income of a family is only 465.80 yuan, or \$56.12, equivalent to one day's income for a worker in a developed country. The farmers are still living in primitive conditions and are ignorant of the damage caused by the opium industry. In their eyes, poppies are just a crop like corn or rice. It's also difficult for them to make a living from anything else as poppies are one of the few cash crops that can be grown successfully in the hilly terrain of Wa state. Destroying poppy crops of more than 100,000 hectares seems unimaginable to them.

Though the outside world still doubts Bao's pledge to change this situation, Han is determined to use his camera to record the progress in Wa state. In 2000, Bao and the UWSA began a relocation project to move the poppy planters from northern hill areas to plains near the border of Burma and Thailand, where the climate and soil are suitable for rice and corn rather than just poppies. Again, it has been claimed that Bao only did this to extend the reach of his drug empire to strategic border territories. "The UWSA admits that it had to use force to get the people to move," says Han. He believes the UWSA had no choice but to move the people. He also realized that the world should know about the plight of the Wa people. "These poppy planters are innocent and in need of help," he says.

By 1999, after five years work, Han had recorded more than 200 tapes and he was looking for an international partner with an objective view to publicize the story. By chance, he got to know Bill Kurtis, a well-known US documentary producer, whose program *Investigative Report* is a popular show in the US. After watching Han's tapes,

Kurtis wanted to go to Wa state to interview Bao personally. It took Han two years to clear all the obstacles and set up the interview. Han says, "It was like mission impossible, but I completed it."

The product of Han and Bill's hard work was the broadcast of a documentary titled "Warlord" which aired on the US Arts and Entertainment cable channel in April last year. Han is proud of the fact that after the program went out, the US Department of Justice and US drug officials said they would begin a new investigation into Bao's progress in moving on from opium.

## Showing both sides of the story

Han goes to Wa state two or three times a year and stays for more than a month each time. His life in the Golden Triangle is full of excitement, even though he has suffered from insect-bites, malaria, traffic accidents and many other dangers. He has also picked up diabetes, possibly a result of continuous consumption of sugarcane during his time in Wa state. "Interestingly, my diabetes seems to show its effects only when I leave Golden Triangle and when I am there, it doesn't trouble me. I guess it is because when I am there, I am always moving around and in a state of excitement."

Once he was invited by a local village leader to have dinner. The host showed his hospitality by killing a dog to prepare the meal. Outside the room, Han noticed the bowls of rice looked black, but when he came in and sat down the rice was white. Han suddenly realized that it must have been covered by flies. Of course he had no choice but to eat the meal.

Han feels he has found a significant cause. "The life there is more colorful than people realize; outsiders think it's all black and white. I feel I am standing on top of a hill and I can see both sides, so my job is to tell each side what the other is like and help them get to know each other."

Han still works in Beijing. Like anyone else, he has to make money to pay the bills. "I work hard and compete with others to earn money, just like everyone else. But I spend time and money on this cause and I feel triumphant about that."

After eight years of filming, Han has collected enough stories for his own documentaries and he is planning a book on the Golden Triangle. He believes what he is doing will benefit both himself and Wa state. As to the future, he says, "I just want to continue filming."



By He Zuo

The pillaging in 1860 that turned the most extravagant and beautiful imperial garden into ruins is not only a black spot in history, but also left a permanent scar on the hearts of the Chinese.

The construction of the Zhengjue Temple and the excavation of the Hanjingtang relics site at Yuanmingyuan marks the beginning of the largest renovation in the garden's history.

#### Opposing views

There are two schools of thought that have dominated debate over the renovation of Yuanmingyuan.

The prevailing view holds that the "Garden of Gardens" represented the culmination of 5,000 years of Chinese culture. The goal of the imperialist forces that plundered and burnt Yuanmingyuan was nothing short of the total annihilation of Chinese civilization.

According to this school of thought, reconstruction of the garden will help restore the self-esteem and self-confidence of the Chinese people. It will also help promote traditional culture and raise Beijing's profile internationally. Therefore, the park should be restored to its former glory, with as much of the scenery as possible being reproduced as accurately as possible.

The opposing view holds that the sense of history in the ruins and remains of the garden is irreplaceable, and that a faithful reproduction of the imperial garden is simply not feasible. To remember the humiliation of history is of greater significance and of more value than building a new park for the capital. Maintaining the ruins as a memorial to the past will help to engrave on people's hearts the truth that "Underdevelopment means vulnerability to attack."

If we reconstruct the garden, we erase the scars left by the invaders, and the lessons of history will soon fade from memory. Therefore, the ruins should be preserved largely as they are, and attempts to reproduce the original scenery should be minimal, goes this line of reasoning.

However the debate is now largely academic. "Rebuilding the garden is inevitable now, the ques-

Debate has long raged about what to do with the ruins of Yuanmingyuan, the Garden of Perfection and Brightness, one of the most brilliant creations of the Qing Dynasty.

The oldest part of Yuanmingyuan was built in 1709 by Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722). After being plundered and burnt by British and French allied forces in 1860, it underwent a series of renovations, until in 1900, it was totally razed by the invading Eight-power Allied Forces.

## Restoring the Garden of Gardens



A few marble columns are all that remain of Dashuifu, in the north-eastern section of Yuanmingyuan.

Photo by Su Guanming

tion is how much will be reproduced," says Zong Tianliang, director of the Yuanmingyuan administrative office, "We have submitted the renovation plan to the relevant authority, and once the plan is approved, the construction will begin."

#### First steps

"Preliminary renovation will begin in April, with a total estimated investment of 250 million yuan this year, of which 50 million is already in place," says Zong. "The near-term focus of the renovation will be on the hills, waters, plants and accessory facilities of the west area of Fuhai Lake, which includes Dagongmen area and Jiuzhou area; Changchunyu (Ever-green Garden) including Hanjingtang and Xiyanglou; and Yichunyu, which includes Zhengjue Temple, Fenglinzhou, and Qinxiazhai."

The waterscapes and hills, once the soul of Yuanmingyuan, have long lost their glamour. The renovation will be carried out in six stages, including the reconstruction of the stone walls that protect the banks of the lakes and canals, resurfacing and replanting, and repair of tourist facilities and water, drainage and electrical systems, all of which will be completed by the end of the year.

#### Degree of uncertainty

Archaeological excavation of the relics site is also a crucial part of this year's work. Zong says that among the 160 scenic spots in the garden, the precise locations of over 80 percent are not clearly enough defined.

Zong says that unlike other current projects such as the construction of the Olympic venues, where every structure and its surrounds has a detailed blueprint, no one really knows exactly what the garden looked like in its heyday, despite there being a number of plans of the garden in existence. The elaborate structures created during the rule of five Qing emperors over a period of 150 years will be enormously difficult to replicate.

An average of over one million tourists visit Yuanmingyuan every year. Entry to the park is 10 yuan and 15 yuan for the Xiyanglou ruins. Park officials say tourism will not be affected during the renovation, which is estimated to be completed by the end of 2006.



Photo provided by Photocom

## China National Museum Established

By Iris Miao

The China National Museum, emerging out of the National Museum of Chinese History and National Museum of Chinese Revolution, was officially established last Friday. The name of the museum, inscribed by President Jiang Zemin, was affixed to the central column of the gate of the History and Revolutionary Museum complex.

The current venue of the museums, on the east side of Tian'anmen Square, was completed in August 1959, in the space of just one year. On October 1 that year, on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the museums opened to the public.

As time passed, however, the old venues proved incapable of keeping up with the demands of storing and displaying an ever-growing collection, which now exceeds 500,000 artifacts.

After the renovation project finishes, a permanent show will be opened to fully and systematically display the history of China, including the achievements made during the periods of revolution, construction, reform and opening to the outside world.

The collection of the current two museums will be enriched, various exhibitions of artworks will be held, and there will be special exhibitions to commemorate important occasions.

As a national museum, it will also assume the mission of international cultural exchange, to import high-level cultural exhibitions from other countries and to export Chinese cultural exhibitions to the outside world. A large expert workforce will be cultivated to reinforce academic research and make the museum an academic center for the country.

The establishment of the national museum is not merely a merger of the two museums, but a project not confined to the extension of venues and refurbishment of facilities, and more importantly, focusing on the reorganization of resources, ideas, systems and mechanics, and the innovation of methods.

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## New Shajiabang Strikes A Nerve

By Zhang Huan

*Shajiabang*, one of the five model Beijing operas that came out of the Cultural Revolution, is known to almost every citizen of this country. The heroine, Sister Ah Qing, is still considered an exemplar of quick wits and upholding justice. The public's love of the opera, and especially her character, is likely behind the outburst of debate over the publishing of a mid-length novel also called *Shajiabang* in this year's first issue of *South of the River*, a bimonthly literary magazine based in Zhejiang Province. The novel casts each character, in fact the whole story, in a very different light, with Sister Ah Qing depicted as a promiscuous, unrestrained woman capable of "making men lose all sense."

The new version of *Shajiabang* also fundamentally changes the nature of the relations between Sister Ah Qing and the other main characters, Hu Chuankui, the local warlord, and Guo Jianguang, a political instructor of the New Fourth Army, a troop of the Anti-Japanese Army led by the Communist Party. Hu, a reactionary blockhead in the original opera, is presented as a rough man who in the end destroys a Japanese gun turret, while Guo, the main male character of the opera, is described as an incapable man unable to come up with suitable plan when difficulties and dangers arise. Most controversial of all, the married Sister Ah Qing has affairs with both men. At one point she boldly tells Guo, "Hu and I are lovers, and that's the way it is."

The novel has caused a big stir in literary circles and among ordinary people since it debuted, and has emerged as a hot topic of press coverage. All the debates about the book seem to center around one main question: should there be limits to literary revisionism?

### Model operas (Yangbanxi)

*Yangbanxi*, or model operas, are products of the tumultuous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In 1964, during the National Festival of Beijing Opera on Contemporary Themes, several good plays, such as *The Red Lantern*, *Sparks Amid the Reeds* and *Taking the Bandits' Stronghold* came out. The next year, Jiang Qing, wife of Mao Zedong, used these plays as the models for modern operas. She supervised the adaptation of the plays into opera form, later extending her policy to ban all opera performances except for the five ones she had overseen. These five "revolutionary model operas" were *Taking the Bandits' Stronghold*, *On the Docks*, *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment*, *Sparks Amid the Reeds*, and *The Red Lantern*. They were joined by two rev-

olutionary modern ballets and one symphony in the ranks of Jiang Qing's approved "model" performance pieces.

### The roots of Shajiabang

The Beijing Opera *Shajiabang* has its roots in the Huju (Shanghai-style) Opera *Sparks Amid the Reeds*, a creation of the Shanghai Huju Opera Theatre made from 1958 to 1960 and written down by Wen Mu, the theatre's in-house playwright. In 1964, the work was refashioned into a Beijing opera and performed in the National Festival of Beijing Opera on Contemporary Themes. In 1965, the name of the opera was changed to *Shajiabang*.

*Shajiabang* recounts a story from the War of Resistance against Japan. In the autumn of 1939, a troop of the Anti-Japanese Army led by the Communist Party was ordered to move out from Shajiabang, a town beside Lake Yangcheng in northern China. In their haste, they were forced to leave 18 of their wounded comrades behind. The

local committee of the Communist Party handed the responsibility of taking care of and protecting the wounded soldiers to Sister Ah Qing, a secret Party liaison who managed a teahouse as a front. To keep them from being discovered by the Japanese army, Sister Ah Qing and other locals hid the soldiers amid the dense reeds near town. The Japanese colluded with the local warlord Hu Chuankui and his chief of staff Diao Deyi to look for the soldiers. Diao suspected Sister Ah Qing had hidden the men, sparking a battle of wits and courage between the two sides.

### Words from the main characters

**Xue Rong, author of the new novel Shajiabang**

"In both the Huju opera *Sparks Amid the Reeds* and the Beijing opera *Shajiabang*, the characters Sister Ah Qing and Hu Chuankui and Guo Jianguang have influenced people of several generations. My creation gives a more human feel to the

relationships between them. In the original *Shajiabang*, Sister Ah Qing's husband is a character of no importance, but there must be Ah Qing, the husband, if there is already a Sister Ah Qing. So, what kind of a person is Ah Qing? Viewers and some scholars have posed this question. I am over thirty, and I have had a lot of different experiences. So, for a variety of reasons, I decided to center my novel around the character of Ah Qing.

"The only thing the original play and my novel have in common is that they share the same backdrop and the characters have the same names.

"The novel is an experimental creation and I hope it will give a human depiction of that time. It is not a wanton or joking retelling of the story."

**Ms. Jin, branch Party secretary of the Shanghai Huju Opera Theatre**

"I heard about this on the radio, and I am angry. There's no way I could accept such a novel. The characters in *Sparks Amid the Reeds* are artistic images forged from the

creators' life experiences. They are nourishment for the mind. The values and revolutionary outlook revealed in the opera are also typical of the era of the War of Resistance against Japan. The characters in the opera are known in every household in the country, and are already perfected images.

In recent years, many people have talked with Wen Mu's wife and family members about doing a revised version of *Sparks Amid the Reeds*, but were all refused. I think the author of the new novel is using the reputation and fame of the original *Shajiabang* to achieve his own aims. I will not read this novel. I fear it would soil my eyes."

**Xiao Huiqin, wife of Wen Mu, writer of the original Sparks Amid the Reeds**

"I am opposed to this novel, in fact I am angered and insulted by it. If someone wants to write something creative, they should go through life and collect their own ideas and material. Why use the same names as in *Sparks Amid the Reeds*? What the author has done is a total smear. Wen Mu's *Sparks Amid the Reeds* pays

tribute to heroes, the truth, goodness and beauty, all of which are needed in today's society. So what are the aims of the author of the new novel? What are his intentions and motives? Is his novel socially responsible? Wen Mu created his work out of the sense of responsibility and mission that literary workers should have - did this author do the same? I have not ruled out taking legal action against the author."

### Comments

**Chen Xiaoming, literary critic**

Rewriting is a mean of creation widely used by Western post-modern writers, who have come up with their own takes on the Bible and Shakespeare's works. Now that there are lots of books and TV series that make fun of the people of China's imperial past, it is not surprising someone has rewritten the story of Ah Qing. For decades, the literary field and common people have been very curious about Ah Qing. Now this character has been fleshed out, satisfying some readers' curiosity. Judgments of the book should be based on its literary merit, not the fact that it has changed the nature of a beloved story.

**Wang Gan, literary critic**

This kind of novel is nothing unconventional, but it is unusual for a book to spark such a heated debate. These days, fewer and fewer works truly provoke social dialog. I think the reason this has proven so controversial is because it has touched a collective nerve in society. A novel is a novel. It should be judged according to its literary value, not anything else.

**Li Gengchen, essayist**

Can people simply write or imagine anything they want? There should be a limit to literary creation. In this age, we are in need of heroes. The War of Resistance against Japan was a very important episode in Chinese history. There are not enough heroes in our literary tradition, and now one has been spoiled, vilified and vulgarized by this novel.

**Anonymous, literary and art worker in the army**

Sister Ah Qing has been a hero in the heart of every Chinese for the past half century. There are few successful literary characters set in the War of Resistance against Japan. This presentation of Sister Ah Qing is unacceptable to anyone who went through that war.

**Wang Shijing, retired worker**

I was very angry after I read some reports on this book. I am opposed to the publication of such a novel. A work like this can make us laugh, but cannot find a real place in our hearts. Writers should go down to the grassroots level to experience life before they put pen to paper.



Sister Ah Qing (left) rebuffs the evil warlord Hu Chuankui (right) and his lackey Diao Deyi (center) in a production of the model opera Shajiabang.

# Is Nothing Sacred?

Novelist turns the table on heroes of model revolutionary opera

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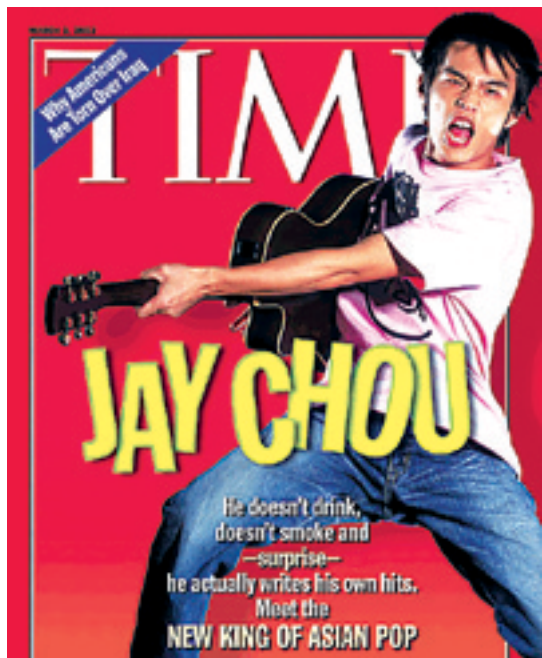
# Greek Tragedy Comes to Beijing

By Dong Nan  
The National Theater of Greece is giving a performance of the Greek tragedy *Antigone*, by Sophocles, tonight at the Tianqiao Theater.  
This is the third time the world renowned theater company has visited the Beijing stage. The first was in 1979, with *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus and in 1999, they performed their groundbreaking production of Euripides's *Medea*.  
Greek actress Lydia Koniordou, who rose to fame playing the title role in the National Theater of Greece production of *Elektra* in 1996, plays Antigone.  
Telling a haunting and tragic tale about an individual's uncompromising quest for justice against a tyrannical

state, *Antigone* is as relevant and poignant today as when it premiered two-and-a-half millennia ago in ancient Athens.  
This immortal piece is well known to Chinese drama lovers. Early in 1988, the Harbin Drama Theater staged their own production of *Antigone* and participated in a theater festival in Greece the same year. Beijing Hebei Bangzi Theater performed an adaptation of Antigone last year, called *The Thebes*.  
The play will be performed in modern Greek, with English and Chinese subtitles.  
**Where:** March 7, 7:30 pm **When:** Tianqiao Theater **Admission:** 20-50 yuan



Lydia Koniordou



## Time for Jay Chou

By Dong Nan  
Following A-Mei and Ayumi Hamasaki, Jay Chou last week became the third Asian pop star to grace the cover of *Time Asia*.  
“He doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, and surprise, he actually writes his own hits,” reads the cover story titled *Cool Jay*.  
Hailing him as the “new king of Asian pop,” the seven-page article gives a vivid exploration of Chou's music and career, to reveal “how a kid with an overbite, aquiline nose and receding chin displaced the Nicholases and Andys and Jackys to become Asia's hottest pop star.”  
While his high school English teacher considered Chou had a learning disability, his mother noticed that he was sensitive to music before he could walk. His high school piano teacher recalled that while other kids were cramming for the college entrance exam, Chou was skipping school and putting in more time on the piano.  
“Music,” according to the article, “is all that matters in Chou's life. It saves him. It defines him. It's his salvation, his luck. It's the only thing he has.”  
“My personal philosophy,” the 24-year-old rising star says of his stunning success, “is that whatever you do, you don't try to follow others. Go your own way, you know?”

## Fanny's Smile Wins over Audience

By Nebula Dong  
A Chinese and Austrian co-production *On the Other Side of the Bridge* currently screening in Beijing is proving immensely popular with local audiences.  
The movie tells an affectionate love story beyond culture and time. Vienna, 1931, Fanny Ebner, (Nina Proll), daughter of a police instructor, falls in love with Chinese police officer Ma Yunlong (Wang Zhiwen), who is in the Austrian capital on a training program. On her 18th birthday Fanny leaves Vienna for China to marry Yunlong. Their love endures the test of time, and lasts for a lifetime.  
The script is adapted from the autobiography of Du Wagner, who married an ordinary Chinese man in 1934 and spent her whole life with him. Sadly, the 87-year-old passed away on February 20, on the eve of the movie's Shanghai premiere.  
Many people in the audience, deeply moved by the epic love story, openly shed



Fanny (Nina Proll) and Yunlong (Wang Zhiwen)

tears in the cinema.  
Wang Zhiwen, who rose to fame in a series of TV soap operas, plays the role of Ma Yunlong. His performance won him best actor award at the “Faces of Love” film festival in Moscow last month.



Pipa player Yang Jing

## New Classics Premiere

By Dong Nan  
China Philharmonic Orchestra gave its 2002-2003 *Season Symphonic Concert* last Sunday at Poly Theatre. The concert, conducted by Yang Yang, presented the audience with the international premiere of four new classic works.  
The four pieces were NT Yates and Xiao Hu's *Requiem - Eulogy of the Immortals* and *Prelude to New Century*, John Sharpley's *Concerto for Zheng and Orchestra (When Cranes Fly Home)* and Minoru Miki's *Pipa Concerto*.  
“It is interesting that the two foreign composers wrote concertos based on traditional Chinese musical instruments, while Chinese young composers wrote western style symphonies,” remarked *Beijing Youth Daily*, Saturday.  
Renowned Japanese composer Minoru Miki's *Pipa Concerto* performed by Yang Jing, with a reference to the Chinese ancient lyric *Pipa Ballad* by Bai Juyi, was a highlight.

## WORLDWIDE



### Fedorov Confirms Brief Marriage to Kournikova

*Detroit Red Wings* center Sergei Fedorov has admitted he and tennis player Anna Kournikova were married but are now divorced and no longer talk.  
Fedorov, 33, rated as one of the top players in the National Hockey League, confirmed his relationship with his 21-year-old fellow Russian in *The Hockey News*.  
“They are true,” said Fedorov, when asked about rumors concerning their wedding. “We were married, albeit briefly, and we are now divorced.”  
Fedorov has had a long-running relationship with Kournikova dating back to when she burst onto the tennis scene as a teenager. His mother told reporters back in 2001 that they had been married in a Moscow registry office. (Reuters)

concert tour, as Monday turned into a rather popular day to announce summer concert gigs.  
The Eagles tour is set to kick off at Richmond, Virginia on May 9 and continue at least through mid-July.  
The outing reunites the *The Long Run* version of the band with Don Henley, Glenn Frey, Joe Walsh and Timothy B. Schmit sans Don Felder to reprise the group's cadre of megahits such as *Hotel California* and *Take It Easy*. (Reuters)



The Eagles

### Magazine: Michael Jackson Put “Curse” on Spielberg

Embattled pop star Michael Jackson wears a prosthetic nose and once paid \$150,000 for a “voodoo curse” to kill director Steven Spielberg despite being deep in debt, *Vanity Fair* magazine reported on Monday.  
*Vanity Fair*, in an article for its March 11 edition, also reports that Jackson bleaches his skin white because he does not like being black. The 44-year-old singer sometimes refers to black people as “spabooks,” the magazine said.  
Jackson's manager did not immediately return phone calls and a faxed request for comment on the article. Jackson's London publicist could not be reached for comment. (AP)



Director Rob Marshall and actress Renee Zellweger

### Chicago Wins Second Hollywood Award in Two Days

*Chicago* picked up its second major film industry award in two days on Sunday night, firmly establishing itself as the movie to beat in the race for the Oscars later this month.  
The hit musical about high-kicking homicidal showgirls was named the best picture of the year by the Producers Guild of America just a night after the Directors Guild of America selected its director, first time filmmaker Rob Marshall, as its director of the year.  
With producers and directors united, *Chicago*, which has 13 Oscar nominations and which has grossed over \$100 million, now has front-runner status in the fight for the Academy Awards on March 23. (Reuters)

### Eagles Hatch Summer Farewell Tour

The Eagles will spread their wings at least one more time this summer for their *Farewell I*

### German Actor Horst Buchholz Dies at 69

Horst Buchholz, a German actor whose film roles ranged from a gunslinger in *The Magnificent Seven* and a Nazi doctor in *Life is Beautiful*, died Monday of pneumonia. He was 69.  
Buchholz, who was recovering from a broken thighbone, died in intensive care at the Charite hospital, spokeswoman Kerstin Ullrich said.  
Dubbed the James Dean of German films for the rebellious teens he played in the late 1950s, Buchholz moved to the United States and scored his first Hollywood hit with a role in *The Magnificent Seven*, the 1960 western with Yul Brynner, Steve McQueen and James Coburn. (AP)



Horst Buchholz

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BEIJING TODAY  
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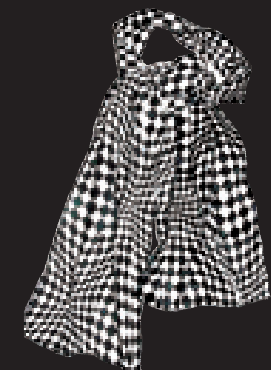


## All Punked Up

By Huang Lisha

The punk aesthetic has evolved in the capital. All but gone are Mohawks and dog collars. Inspired by the axe men and singers in Beijing's many punk bands, the style has taken on a grungier look. One of the purveyors of the new punk is Wang Jian, guitarist for the band Brain Failure, clothes designer and manager of POGO, a small clothing store appealing to rebellious youth.

Jeans are the indispensable "equipment" of all punks. POGO offers lots of hard-to-find jeans brought back by Wang and his friends from tours of Japan. They come in a wide range of colors, and most have tapered legs that make them easier to tuck into big, punk boots. Despite their credentials, the jeans generally go for a reasonable 150 yuan a pair.



Scarf (30 yuan)

Photos provided by POGO

The store also offers a line of necklaces, bracelets, and badges designed by Wang himself. Some of the necklaces (50-100 yuan) and bracelets (20-50 yuan) are made of artificial hide, others of leather and adorned with nail-shaped silver decorations. A recurring theme on POGO items is an upside-down image of a standing person — not coincidentally Brain Failure's logo.

POGO offers plenty of accessories, like bandanas, tools and T-shirts, needed to round out a well-designed neo-punk look. Be on the lookout for cool new items when Wang and Brain Failure return from a gig in the US in the near future.

**Where:** 87 Di'anmen Xidajie (opposite the north gate of Beihai Park), Dongcheng **Tel:** 13681 441141 (Appointments should be made ahead)

## Shopping Lakeside-Style

By Salinda

Now that the Houhai area has become arguably the hippest area to sip and sup in the capital, stores have started opening along the historic streets around the lake, trying to tap the crowds that pour in daily. One of the more fun stores around is Yunshui Ge on Yandai Xiejie, but look carefully for its old-style name sign — the store is easy to pass by.

The tiny shop, just 10 square meters, is packed with more than 1,000 items. Goods range from the old to the modern, traditional to the fashionable, including Jingdezhen porcelain, embroidery pieces, silver jewelry, tea sets, and Cultural Revolution-era Chairman Mao badges.

Wang Hui, owner of the store, has lived on Yandai Xiejie for 46 years, and is happy to regale visitors with tales of the area's colorful history.

The store also plays up the pipe theme, as the name of the street, Yandai, means pipe. Among the smoking tools on sale are the 100-yuan *longhudou* wood pipe, carved with images of a dragon and a tiger, and a nearly meter-long stemmed copper pipe priced at 660 yuan. A water pipe crafted from blue and white porcelain fetches 160 yuan.

Among the pieces of embroidery, the most interesting may be the *bu*, squares of intricately stitched cloth that were worn on the chests and backs of officials' gowns in the Qing Dynasty. These noble works go for 160 yuan per pair.

Smaller items include elegant chopsticks made of rosewood or porcelain that sell for only 8 yuan per pair.

**Where:** 22 Yandai Xiejie, Houhai, Xicheng **Open:** 8 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 8402 5572



Gourd (60 yuan)

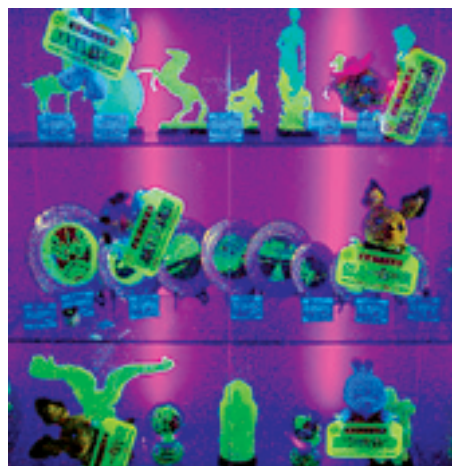


Funny money boxes (25 yuan each)

## Shots in the Dark

By Huang Lisha

When you turn out the lights, it doesn't matter how much you've spent on decorating your home — it's going to be dark. That is unless you've made a trip to Light Bar, a store on the sixth



floor of Xindong'an Plaza that offers a wide range of items that share the special quality of glowing in the dark. Sitting in a pitch black room could end up being fun, if surrounded by these funky, questionably tasteful objects that cast off eerie phosphorescent glows.

The store takes an unusual, but effective, approach to highlighting its luminous goods — it is completely dark,

## Dolls for Hanging

By Salinda

Who says dolls are just for little girls? The store Shicaotang Chouniu Shenghuo specializes in handmade cloth dolls that make fun decorations when hung on a wall or put on a bag. From leg to head, they are made of ordinary cloth, except for their leather feet.

Even though they are handmade, the dolls come cheap, priced at 10-188 yuan each for dolls five to 30 inches tall, with most falling in the 20 to 50 yuan range.

The cloth dolls come in a few different series, country, classical, military, fashionable, ethnic and cartoon. Within each series, the dolls have different hair and clothing styles, colors and postures. Every doll has its own name and a serial number that proves its uniqueness, along with a pin on its back making it easy to hang.

Among the country series are the *kucaihua* dolls that depict children of limited means, to put it nicely. Their hair and the baskets in their hands are made of grass and their clothes are coarse and patched. The dolls in the military series are covered in camo and hoist mini-military bags. They're dressed to kill for only 38 yuan each.

More fashionable models come in *qipao* (traditional Chinese dresses), costumes of minority peoples, or western skirts and outfits with dazzling colors.

The store also offers a range of casual bags, scarves and book covers made from the same soft cloth as the dolls.

**Where:** 241 Dongsidajie, Dongcheng **Open:** 9:30 am - 9 pm



Photos by Li Shuzhuan



30 yuan

except for the purplish rays of several black lights. In that environment, the glowing items stand out in sharp relief, from large sculptures to smaller items such as a cute hand-shaped "No smoking" sign on the wall (5 yuan). Drivers can keep others on the road at night at bay by hanging a little bear holding a shining sign that reads, "Please don't kiss me. I don't like repairs" (38 yuan), on the back windshield of their car. Also available are long-time favorites of kids and sci-fi fans, sets of glow-in-the-dark adhesive moons and stars (20 yuan) that can be affixed to the ceiling.

One of the more popular items is a transparent glass apple inside which are suspended glowing green spots (39 yuan). Sixteen little pigs striking different poses (106 yuan) can add a whimsical air to a dark room. A spookier note is struck by the glowing skeletons that come in a range of sizes, priced from 10 to 120 yuan.

Also available are smaller, fun glow-in-the-dark items, such as rings (48 yuan each), bracelets (58 yuan), key rings (7-10 yuan), and ashtrays (70 yuan).

**Where:** 639 Xindong'an Plaza, Wangfujing Dajie **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6816 9935

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# A Little Something for the Ladies

By James Liu

Tomorrow is International Women's Day, a day to hold high the ideal of equality of the sexes and celebrate all that is female. Also not a bad excuse for men to treat the women in their lives to a good meal. Below are three restaurants that offer pleasant environments and good healthy food to make that special someone feel extra special on Women's Day.



## Cabo Café and Bar

This Mexican-theme restaurant, a two-story pale-brown castle, crouches quietly in a forest of high-rises near Sci-Tech Plaza. Its main door is on the second floor, up a spiral staircase. The large dining room on that floor offers swing-style seats, flowers and lots of sun thanks to its glass ceiling, with additional seating in the floor below.

Cabo sells about 30 kinds of wine, including eleven kinds made in Chile, together with seven kinds of Mexican tequila and other booze choices. Drinks range from 30 yuan to nearly 1,900 for a bottle of top wine.

A festive, nearly authentic Mexican atmosphere is established by large tapestries hanging on the walls, and copies of paintings by Diego Rivera, a Mexican artist and revolutionary. When the weather heats up, Cabo lifts the lid on its huge roof garden that offers seating for more than 500.



The kitchen specializes in fare from Mexico's Baja peninsula, known for its spice and saltiness. Good choices are the cactus salad (58 yuan), and the enchiladas, which are tortillas rolled around cheese, chili chicken or beef, and baked. Ever popular are the fajitas, beef or chicken seared on a hot plate with vegetables, and then served with tortillas, lettuce, and refried beans.

First-time Mexican diners can try the set meals, going for 88 yuan each all this month.

**Add:** Huaqiaocun, No. 24, Jianguomenwai Dajie **Open:** 10 am - 2 am **Tel:** 6515 6826 **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person

## Fantasy Universal Restaurant

While no one is going to use the word gourmet for the Fantasy Universal restaurant, located on the second floor of the Pacific Shopping Mall, it does offer unusual range



and quality for a food court, and is a good place to take a rest after some vigorous wall exercise.

The food at Fantasy spans the continents, including Italian-style pasta and Japanese sushi. The main foods are noodles, pizza, tepanyaki (meat grilled on a hot plate with vegetables), curry and rice, Japanese set meals and Chinese specialties.

Dining is done in a large room that can hold 140 people, with a separated smoking area. Large windows give the hall an open, airy feel, again a step up from the dungeon-like cafeterias at the bowels of most shopping malls.

**Add:** Second floor, Pacific Century Place, No.2 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District **Open:** 10:30 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 6539 3888 ext. 1227 **Average cost:** 40 yuan per person



Beef teppanyaki

## Chicago Chef Stars at Aria

Aria, a place to indulge and have fun in the China World Hotel, looks forward to the arrival of guest chef William Stepek of Chicago. Stepek works at the Signature Room, a restaurant on the 95th-floor of the John Hancock Center, and will present his signature dishes such as smoked Washington salmon, sautéed wild striped sea bass, and poached Maine lobster for lunch and dinner through March 16.

This restaurant has earned a reputation among the city's expats as a place for authentic French cuisine, with its emphasis on fresh



ingredients, fine wine and live musical performances. This kind of luxury doesn't come cheap, but is a great way to show a woman that you are ready to fork it out to make her happy.

The Chicago theme is also behind a special offer. Thanks to sponsor United Airlines, any Aria customers that travel on United between Chicago and Beijing during March and April can get a free dinner with the purchase of one regular meal by presenting their boarding pass.

**Add:** Second floor, China World Hotel, No. 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District **Open:** 12 am - 2pm, 6 pm - 10pm **Tel:** 6505 2266 ext. 36 **Average cost:** 300 yuan per person

## Diet Juice Recipes

### Radish and potato juice

Both radishes and potatoes are high in protein and vitamin C. The blended juice of the two roots can help with weight loss and maintaining health. Wash two or three potatoes and one medium size radish, then run them through a juicer. Add honey if desired.

### Coriander cider

This funky brew can help treat acne. Put 30 grams of coriander, one apple, half a lemon and 100 grams of rape through a juicer for 250 milliliters of cider.

### Carrot juice

Mix two-thirds of a carrot, half an apple and 20 grams of coriander in a juicer, then add some lemon juice. This vitamin C-heavy concoction can relieve weary eyes and soften the skin.

### Lettuce and carrot juice

This juice mixture can help remedy hair loss. Combine the juices of 200 grams of lettuce, a medium sized carrot, a medium sized apple, and a lemon segment into 250 milliliters of juice.

### Tomato and pineapple juice

A juice for soothing sunburn - run one green pepper, one tomato, 100 grams of pineapple and 30 grams coriander through a juicer.



Photos by Zhuang Jian



## Dining Out

**By Wesley Lei**  
**Yume No Hako Bento Boxes**  
In ancient times, visitors to temples in Japan were presented with vegetarian dishes prepared by the monks. Nowadays, meals are served in special boxes called Bento Boxes. At Nishimura, Chef Hirayama has prepared a special menu nicely presented in classic bento style. **Where:** Nishimura Restaurant, Shangri-La Hotel **When:** March 3 - 30 **Tel:** 6841 2211 ext. 2719

**Tea Delights at Marriott Hotel West**  
A selection of international pastries and sweets are provided every Saturday and Sunday afternoon from 3 pm to 5 pm at the Lobby Bar. Special cakes can be ordered and taken away. **Cost:** 90 yuan per person **Where:** No. 98 Xisanhuan Beilu **Tel:** 6872 6699 ext. 75153

**New Chef's Special Business Lunches**  
Chef Mike Yau and his team offer a range of new seasonal business luncheons. **Cost:** 148 yuan, including tea or one soft drink **Where:** Celestial Court, St. Regis Beijing **Tel:** 6460 6688 ext. 2460

**Spring Tea Dishes**  
Pick up the first arrival of spring tea for 2003 and sample a series of tea-inspired dishes such as braised sliced pork in green tea, sautéed shrimps marinated in longjing tea and deep-fried chicken wings with jasmine tea. **Where:** 21st Floor Restaurant, Great

Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing **Tel:** 6590 5566 ext. 2295

**Katsudon Dish of the Month**  
Try the new dish of the month for March: *katsudon*, a popular Japanese dish of boiled rice topped with simmered pork cutlets. **Cost:** 88 yuan per person **Where:** Traders Café, Traders Hotel Beijing **Tel:** 6505 2277 ext. 35

**Authentic Turkish Cuisine at Hilton**  
Check out the authentic Turkish food festival at the Atrium Café. All diners will be eligible for the lucky draw, with a grand prize of a four-day trip for two to Istanbul. **Cost:** 185 yuan plus 15 percent **When:** March 12 to 22 **Tel:** 6466 2288 ext. 7406

**Curry cuisine**  
New Otani's coffee shop will run a curry fair in March, offering eight curry dishes, including meat, vegetable and game versions. **Cost:** 50 to 75 yuan **Where:** New Otani Changfugong Hotel **When:** 11 am-9:30 **Tel:** 6512 5555 ext. 1036

**Symphony Private Dining**  
The Symphony Room offers the perfect setting for fine dining. Each chef will personally prepare a signature five-course menu matched with celebrated Canadian wines on March 8, 10, 12, 14 and ending with a final gourmet dinner designed by all the chefs on March 15. **Where:** Seasons Café, Kempinski Hotel Beijing **Tel:** 6465 3388 ext. 4118



## Java Indonesian Restaurant

By Joel Kirkhart

This year, the Comfort Inn became home to one of the first Indonesian restaurants in the city, Java. However, it seems the hotel location may actually have put a collar on the quality of the food - what should be spiced to the wazoo is tame and unsatisfying.

The restaurant is very large and clearly a lot of thought

a skimpy appetizer.

Meat dishes did not fare much better. The *ikan peppes*, chili fish fillet wrapped with banana leaves, came out as two small tubes of chunked fish fillet that looked nice and red with chili, but in fact lacked zip. At 50 yuan, it was the least expensive fish dish on the menu, of which most cost around 100 yuan or more. The Java-



Fried tofu and peanut sauce

nese charcoal grilled chicken in special sauce (*ayam panggang*, 40 yuan for half a bird) sounded great, but also got tepid reviews. It was cooked nicely, the meat tender and falling off the bone, but the portion was small. The special sauce did indeed have some interesting flavors, but they were too weak - another dish that could have been nice yet fell short because of timid spicing.

Java has the potential to be a good addition to Beijing's restaurant circuit - let's hope that as the kitchen warms up, they get a little more liberal with the spices and portions. As it is, four diners left the restaurant out 300 yuan, unsatisfied and still hungry, and that's hardly a recipe for success.

**Add:** No. 4 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District **Open:** 11 am - 11 pm **Tel:** 8523 5522 ext.2805, 8523 5396 **Average cost:** 80 yuan per person

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## Humor Through Loneliness



Oil painting by Luan Xiaojie

A show of Luan Xiaojie's "Big Boy Series" of oil paintings. These works center on a boy, sometime with a seeming siamese twin, playing meaningless games. Though there are balls, chairs, mirrors and other odds and ends around, the main toy in all the paintings is himself. The artist may be trying to call the audience's attention to the loneliness, narcissism and immaturity of a world in which people communicate less and less.

**Where:** Qin Gallery, Huaweili Enjoy Paradise1-1E (North of Beijing Curio City) Chaoyang **When:** March 7-31, 9:30 am - 6 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461

## Music



David Russell

### Classical Guitarist David Russell

The New York Times has called David Russell "a talent of extraordinary dimensions". He has won nearly every major international guitar competition, including the Jose Ramirez Guitar Competition, the Andres Segovia Competition and the Francisco Tarrega Competition. The program includes "Morceau de Concert Pour La Princesse Adelaide", "Spanish Dance No. 5", "Spanish Dance No. 10", and four Scottish pieces, "Sanas Cuain (Message of the Sea)", "The Bride's Reel", "The Rose Bud of Allenvale" and "Miss Mary Walker of Peterhead".

**Where:** National Library Concert Hall, Nandajie Zhongguancun **When:** March 7, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 100-280 yuan **Tel:** 8854 5520

### Folk Songs from the West

Performed by Beijing Festival Chorus Troupe. Ancient folk songs will transport the audience to China's far west.

**Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** March 7, 2 pm **Admission:** 60-280 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888

### Oscar Film Themes Symphony Concert

Film highlights accompanied by live performances of movie theme music by the China Opera and Dance Drama Theatre Symphony Orchestra, which has recorded the music for many films. Familiar tunes will come from such flicks as *Titanic*, *Jurassic Park* and *Waterloo Bridge*.

**Where:** Nationality Cultural Palace Theatre **When:** March 8, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-380 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 508

### Trip-hop Band

British trip-hop outfit Morcheeba hits Beijing. The band, which has released celebrated albums including *Who Can You Trust*, *Big Calm* and *Charango* since their inception in 1995, merge a wide range of musical styles, including trip-hop, dub, folk, jazz, reggae, psychedelia, soul and R'n'B. Vocalist Skye Edwards is the focal point, offset by brothers Ross Godfrey (guitars, bass, keyboards) and Paul Godfrey (drums, percussion, scratching).

**Where:** Yan Club, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** March 8-9, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 150 yuan **Tel:** 8457 3506

### Evergreen Idol

Qi Qin, whose pop songs made him one of the earliest idols from Taiwan, is ready to woo the capital's fans. His two best known songs, *Perhaps in Winter* and *The Outside World*, won Qi a loyal following when he first appeared on the scene in the mid-80s. He'll be backed by the Beijing Symphony Orchestra.

**Where:** Capital Gymnasium, Baishiqiao Lu **When:** March 21, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6833 5552

## Stage

### Crazy Teaching Methods (Ma Laoshi De Fengkuang Jiaoxuefa)

Performed by Wuren Didai (No Man's Land), a Hong Kong group founded by Deng Shurong in 1997, this drama relies heavily on body language to depict the life of a misunderstood teacher. Also includes a generous sprinkling of Cantonese ad slogans and one-liners.

**Where:** Beibingmasi Theatre, Beibingmasi Hutong, Jiadaokou Nadajie, Xicheng **When:** March 12-16, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 30-120 yuan **Tel:** 6406 0175, 6404 8021

## Performance

### Legendary Bird

A stage version of a play created by the Tianjin Ballet affiliated to the Tianjin Opera and Dance Theatre. Inspired by a Chinese myth, the story tells how a mythical bird called Jingwei tries to fill up the sea with pebbles.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** March 12-14, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-580 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext 5176



Performed by the Tianjin Ballet Troupe

### Greek tragedy—Antigone

Performed by the Greek National Drama Troupe. The story tells of young Antigone's struggles to preserve her family's honour, after her brother Polynices is declared a traitor by her uncle, the King of Thebes. The king refuses to let Polynices' body be buried inside the city walls and Antigone is determined to fight for justice, to the death if needs be.

**Where:** Tianqiao Theater, 30 Beiwei Lu, Xuanwu **When:** March 7, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 20-50 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888

### The Red Detachment of Women

Performed by the Central Ballet of China, this classic revolutionary ballet focuses on a group of female soldiers in Hainan Island during the Civil War (1927-1937). An evening of ballerinas in khaki short skirts with wooden rifles, teaching landlords the error of their ways.

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** March 7-8, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-680 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 508



Ethnic dance and costumes

### Beijing Night Show

This six-act show includes a wide range of Chinese performing arts, from traditional music, dancing and acrobatics to Beijing opera and minority folk dance.

**Where:** Beijing Night Show, 1 Dayabao Hutong, Dongcheng **When:** every night, 8-9 pm **Admission:** 200-500 yuan **Tel:** 6527 2815, 800 8101282

### Swan Lake

Performed by the Ballet Troupe of the Central Opera and Ballet Theatre. This is a ballet in four acts, based on a German fairy tale. The story tells of princess, Odette, who is turned into a swan by an evil magician. Every midnight, she becomes human again for a few hours. One midnight, she is discovered by Prince Siegfried, who falls madly in love with her and promises to rescue her.

**Where:** Tianqiao Theater **When:** March 14-16, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-580 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 198



A classic romance

## Jams

### Unplugged Evening

Tonight *Folk Music* magazine will host an evening of acoustic tunes, featuring Xiaohe, Meihao Yaodian (*Beautiful Drugstore*), Wan Xiaoli, Feixu (*Ruin*), Buyi (*Cotton Cloth*) and Muma (*Wooden Horse*). On Saturday night, Langutou (*Lazybones*) from Korea will take the stage. On Sunday night Yingtang (*Hard Surge*), Shijie Zhongzhi (*Ending World*), Motianlou (*Skyscraper*), Fanle and Zai Xunhuan (Cycling) will get the crowd going.

**Where:** Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** 9:30 pm **Admission:** adults 40 yuan, students 30 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109

### What's at What

Tonight Pripasia band will perform. Tomorrow night the all-girl band Yanse (*Color*) will hit the stage. On March 13, Dixia Zhiying (*Voice from the Underground*) will perform.

**Where:** What, opposite north gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 13910 209249

### Ballads and Blues

Chinese bands Phonograph and Blues Driver play country music and Chinese ballads.

**Where:** Nashville, Sanlitun South Bar Street, Chaoyang **When:** March 7-8, 9:30 pm - 2 am **Tel:** 6502 4201

### Electronic Music

Catch live electronic music at the experimental end of the spectrum.

**Where:** White Cube, 38 Mao'er Hutong, Di'anmen Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** March 7-8, 9 pm **Tel:** 6401 1675

### Hip Hop Night

Hip hop night with DJs Wesley and Wu on Thursday, including a hip hop happy hour from 10 pm to midnight.

**Where:** Orange, opposite the north gate of the Workers' Stadium, Chaoyang **When:** Thursday, 10 pm **Admission:** 15 yuan, including one drink **Tel:** 6415 7413

## Activities



Painting on your face

### Peking Opera Make-up

Veteran artists from the Peking Opera Troupe will talk about the meaning of the make-up of Peking Opera, and the characters represented by each painted face. Some parts of operas will then be performed. Finally, everyone will get a chance to try their own hand at painting their face a la Beijing Opera. All materials provided.

**Where:** Lee's Antique Carpet, Liangmaqiao Road, close to the 21st Century Hotel **When:** March 9, 2:30-4:30 pm **Admission:** adults 30 yuan, students 20 yuan (extra 20 yuan charge for having artists paint your face) **Tel:** 8851 4913

## Sports

### Fantastic Views All the Way

The mountains in this area are not very high, but the vistas are excellent. This walk is gentle and very interesting, going through valleys, over passes, along a ridge, over a plateau, in a small gorge and through a few little tranquil villages that are located in amazing places. Many sites along the walk offer panoramic view of the surrounding mountains. The walk starts from a village and follows a wide lane in the valley that gently goes up to a pass and surprisingly ends in a park.

**Where:** Pinggu, northeast of Beijing **When:** March 9, meet 8:30 am outside Starbucks at Lido Hotel, or 9 am at Capital Paradise front gate, return 5 pm **Admission:** adults 150 yuan, children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13701 003694 **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

## Lecture

### Chinese Contemporary and Modern Culture and Art

Art critic Zhang Xiaoliang, from the China Central Academy of Fine Art, will analyze Chinese art and culture, and phenomena and trends within, over the past years though a huge slide show. In his popular books, *Knocking at the Door Alone* and *Post Motherism / Sep Motherism*, he has divided these two decades into two periods. English translation provided.

**Where:** Lee's Antique Carpet, Liangmaqiao Road, close to 21st Century Hotel **When:** March 8, 2:30-4:30 pm **Admission:** adults 50 yuan, students 40 yuan **Tel:** 8851 4913

## Exhibitions

### The Color of China Ink

Chinese painters have long worked to go beyond traditional wash and ink techniques and bring more color into their pieces. This exhibition shows artists that have succeeded, with some of the most oriental and inspired works in China today.

**Where:** Creation Gallery, north end of Ritan Donglu **When:** March 10-28, 10 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570



Catching horse by Yang Tiao

### Tang Society and Life Exhibition

The Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) is regarded as the high point of classical Chinese civilization. This exhibition of over 250 Tang relics opens a window to how people lived in that time.

**Where:** National Museum of Chinese History **When:** throughout March, 8:30-4:30 pm **Admission:** adults 20 yuan, students 10 yuan **Tel:** 6512 8321

### Bronzeware Unearthed in Shanxi Province

Twenty-seven bronze pieces unearthed on January 19 in Yangjia Village, Shannxi Province, will be on display. These pieces are considered major archeological finds, believed to be from the time of the reign of King Zhouxuan in the Western Zhou Dynasty (1100-771 BC). All the pieces bear ancient Chinese characters and inscriptions that relate the history of the 12 kings of the Western Zhou Dynasty.

**Where:** China Millennium Monument Art Museum, 9A Fuxing Lu, Haidian **When:** March 9 - April 10, 8:30 am - 5:30 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 6852 7108, 6851 3322

### Spring Greetings

Paintings in bold colors in a traditional Chinese style by young artist Tian Xifeng are displayed to welcome the spring. Tian is a student of famous bird-and flower painting artist Wang Qing. He has won several prizes at various national painting exhibitions and developed a style emphasizing vivid close-ups of natural scenes.

**Where:** Melodic Gallery, 14 Jianwai Dajie, opposite Friendship Store **When:** till March 31, 9 am - 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6518 8123

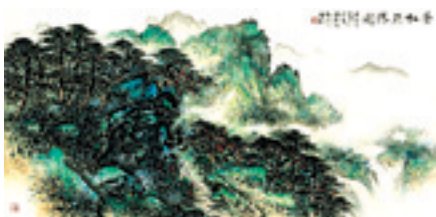


Bird by Tian Xifeng

### Pottery Sculptures

A fresh version of the famous novel *Bailu Yuan* by Chen Zhongshi will be displayed. The new version was produced by local artist Li Xiaochao. He spent three years to create a panorama of the rustic lives of the peasants of Shaanxi Province depicted in the book. The huge work represents 88 scenes from the novel with more than 3,000 pottery pieces.

**Where:** the National Museum of Chinese Modern Literature, Wenxueguan Lu **When:** till March 31, 9 am - 4 pm **Tel:** 8461 9071



Painting by Li Xiongcai

### Collection Exhibition

This exhibition includes oil paintings, watercolors, prints and other works, including paintings by renowned artist Li Xiongcai, the leading exponent of the Ling Nan school, that feature powerful brush strokes and are full of boundless energy. Selected new works by Feng Linzhang, Hu Yongkai, Song Di and Wang Mingming will also be shown, as well as the super realism of Liu Baomin, Xin Yi and Yin Kun.

**Where:** Wanfung Gallery, 136 Nanchizi Dajie **When:** March 7, 10 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6523 3320

## Movies



Ma Shan and Li Xiaoming get serious.

### The Missing Gun

Directed by Lu Chuan, starring Jiang Wen. A policeman named Ma Shan (Jiang Wen) wakes up after a night of drinking at his sister's wedding, to discover that his gun and three bullets are missing. During his search for the gun, everybody becomes a suspect: his wife, his son, his friends, his enemies, and, after one of the bullets is found inside a murder victim (who happens to be his former mistress), even Ma Shan himself. Director Lu Chuan will be on stage for a dialogue with the audience after the screening. Chinese with English subtitle.

**Where:** Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu **When:** March 7-8, 8 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 6430 1398 **Email:** michael@cherrylanemovies.com.cn

### Married to the Mafia

Directed by Jeong Heung-sun, starring Jung Jun-ho and Kim Jung-eun. A surprising gangster comedy about the tough daughter of a Korean mafia family who cedes to her dying sister's wishes to marry and have children; the husband chosen is in for a few surprises. This movie provides an interesting look at exchanged gender roles functioning within the boundaries of a culture that still encourages happily-married endings even for female gangsters. Korean with Chinese subtitle.

**Where:** Room 501, 5th floor Hyundai Millennium Tower, 38 Xiaoyunlu, Chaoyang **When:** March 7, 5:30 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8453 8112



Geuder voles, gaugsta style

### City of God

Directed by Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund, starring Alexandre Rodrigues, Leandro Firmino da Hora and Philippe Haegensen. The film is based on the true life book of the same name—*Cidade De Deus*—and chronicles three decades in the lives of a gang of children of the slums as they grow up through and into a life of drugs and violence in Rio de Janeiro. English with Chinese subtitles.

**Where:** Space for Imagination, 5 Xiwangzhuang Haidian **When:** March 8, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6279 1280

### Cala, My Dog

Directed by Lu Xuechang, starring Ge You. The story is about a middle-aged working man, known as Lao Er, whose chief source of stability and comfort in life is his dog, Cala. One day, when his wife is out walking Cala, a policeman confiscates the unregistered canine. As Lao Er endeavors to recover his dog, the difficult circumstances of his life are revealed. Chinese with English subtitle.

**Where:** Dongchuang Theatre, 3 Xinzhongjie, Dongzhimenwai **When:** March 13 and 20, 8:30 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 6416 9253

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo @ ynet.com or call 6590 2522

By Guo Yuandan





By Jeans / Hong Lei

During the first 10 days of March, the countryside around Luoping (罗平), in Yunnan Province turns into a sea of yellow, as the rape flowers blossom. Rape, used to produce vegetable oil, is planted extensively in this part of China, and the blooming of the flowers is a sure sign that spring has arrived. Luoping holds a Rape Flower Festival every year, beginning from February 20 this year.

Luoping is situated in the east of Yunnan Province, near the juncture of Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guizhou provinces. It is 230 kilometers from Kunming, the capital of Yunnan, and 86 kilometers from Xingyi (兴义), in Guizhou. With a population of 527,000, the area is populated by the Han, Yi, Hui, Buyi, Miao and other nationalities.

A return trip from Kunming takes only one day, by either train (K440 or K43 express) or bus. The train trip takes about four hours, while the bus takes five, but departs more frequently.

It is easy to get around in Luoping. The mini

buses will stop along the road wherever you want. Mini buses and pedicabs can be found near the railway station.

The flowers near the upper reaches of Jiulong Waterfall (九龙瀑布) are particularly pretty, but it is only possible to get to the lower reaches. Duoyi River (多依河) and Lubuge Xiaosanxia (鲁布革小三峡, Lubuge Three Small



Gorges) are also worth a visit. For more information, check website: [www.qj.yn.cninfo.net/travel/sight/luoping.htm](http://www.qj.yn.cninfo.net/travel/sight/luoping.htm) (Chinese only).

**Accommodation:** Zhenxing Street (振兴街) is a busy area with a choice of numerous small, family run hotels, and private and state-owned guesthouses. Standard rooms start from 30 yuan. The Huiyuan Hotel (汇源旅馆) on Yungui Road (云贵路) has reasonably large double rooms with 24-hour hot water, for 40 yuan per room or 30 yuan per person. **Tel:** 0874-8262 316.

If you have time, you might choose to stay with a peasant family in the vicinity of Jiulong Waterfall (九龙瀑布). The accommodation is basic, but cheap. Xinxin Garden (馨心园) at Ming Village (民格村) is also a good choice, 30 yuan per day, including food and accommodation. **Tel:** 13887 493706.

Room reservations can also be made online, at [www.cy99.com](http://www.cy99.com) (Chinese only) **Tip:** Take note of the time the flowers are in bloom. The blossoms last for only 10 days or so, if you arrive late, all you will see is a sea of green stalks.

#### MUSEUM WATCH

## Ancient and Modern Architecture

By Guo Yuandan

The Songtangzhai Folk Carving Museum (松堂斋民间雕刻博物馆) in Xuanwu District is unusual, in that the structure itself is a historic relic.

It was built during the Ming Dynasty and expanded during the Qing. It features wooden carved doors and windows. The crossbeam above the door has some seventy carved figures, all extremely lifelike.

Li Wei, founder and curator of this private museum, himself grew up in a traditional Beijing-style courtyard house. When the house was demolished, he managed to keep one of the *mendun*, the carved stone blocks seen on either side of the entrance to courtyard houses.

From that time on, he has been collecting all kinds of structural relics from ancient buildings.

To date, Li has 300 pairs of mendun, from the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties.



Qing Dynasty stone crossbeam

Photos by Cui Hao



Qing Dynasty doorway from Shanxi

These stone blocks were often carved with vivid designs. The museum also features brick carvings from the Qin and Han dynasties, and stone and wood carvings from the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The most precious relic is a rare carved wooden crossbeam from the Qing Dynasty. It is 225 centimeters long and 35 centimeters high, and features 65 carved figures, as well as flowers, birds and trees, illustrating a scene of the emperor going on a sightseeing tour.

There is also a set of doorways, including a carved wooden doorway from Beijing, a stone doorway from Jiangxi, and a brick carved doorway from Shanxi.

The museum also features various furniture and ornaments, and items such as a stirrup stone and horse trough. (Chinese captions only)

**Where:** 14 Liulichang Dongjie, Xuanwu  
**Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 8316 4662

#### WALL WALKS

## Qiangzilu Great Wall

By Huang Lisha

Lying between the North China Plain and the Yanshan Mountains, Miyun County is an important link between Beijing and the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. Qiangzilu (墙子路), in the far east of Miyun County, has long been a place of key strategic importance. The section of the Great Wall that runs along Qiangzilu, Guanshang, and Quanshuihe villages is known as the Qiangzilu Great Wall.

This section of Great Wall was first constructed during the Hongwu period of the Ming Dynasty, about 600 years ago. As one of the frontier passes close to Beijing, large garrisons of troops were stationed at Qiangzilu through-



out the Ming and Qing dynasties. During that period, Qiangzilu was the headquarters of the stationed troops. As one might expect of such a militarily important pass, Qiangzilu has been the backdrop to many important battles.

Qiangzilu Great Wall runs from north to south, crossing the Quanshui River, climbing up to a high mountain, then descending again, punctuated by beacon-towers and guard-towers. Setting out from Qiangzilu Village, walking to the east about three kilometers, visitors will arrive at the village of Guanshang (关上村), the site of Qiangzi Xiongguan (墙子雄关), a strategic pass in the Great Wall.

Qiangzi Xiongguan Pass is about 2,500 meters long and 3,000 meters wide. With the exception of the northern arched gate, almost all the structures in the pass are now in ruins. A white marble slab on top of the gate is inscribed with the characters "Qiangzi Xiongguan."

To the south of the pass is Wangxiaomiaoding Hill (王小庙顶山). A beacon-tower was constructed on the hill, which commands a wide view of the surrounding countryside. A one-kilometer section of wall extends to a cliff in the north of the pass. The tower once boasted a large cannon to help repel invaders.

The Qiangzilu Great Wall features two distinctive frontier passes: one is called Shuiguan



(水关), or Water Pass. The main body of the wall passes over the Qingshui River. The river flows under it through a sluice gate. The other is Lanmaqiang (拦马墙). There are a series of narrow gaps along this section, through which only one horse could pass at a time, a clever way of preventing a massed attack by enemy forces.

Much of the wall here has been dismantled by locals who find the large stone bricks ideal for constructing pigsties!

Quanshuihe Village (泉水河村) is two kilometers north of Qiangzi Xiongguan, 45 kilometers from Miyun County seat. The Great Wall here is connected with that of Simatai, and extends all the way to Shanhaiguan, on the Bohai Gulf. The Quanshuihe section of wall is almost 10 kilometers long, with two beacon-towers and four guard towers. Here the wall makes a 90-degree turn, in one of the most magnificent stretches of scenery of the Qiangzilu Great Wall.

**Getting there:** Take 101 State Highway as far as Miyun County, then head east on the Miyun-Xinglong (密云-兴隆) road to Qiangzilu and Guanshang villages. Quanshuihe Village is a further two kilometers to the north. An alternative is to take the Chengde train and get off at Qiangzilu.



Photos by Jin Shu